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THOUGHTS ON LIFE-SCIENCE.

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THOUGHTS

ON

LIFE-SCIENCE.

BY

BENJAMIN PLACE. i. e.
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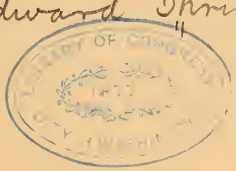

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TO

LIONEL S. BEALE, F.R.S.

WITH A THOROUGH AND HEARTY ADMIRATION

FOR TRUE SCIENCE,

THIS BOOK

IS DEDICATED BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

LEARNING and Science are claiming the right of building up and pulling down everything; especially the latter.

If these claims are well founded mankind at large are hopeless slaves, totally incapable of getting any sound hold on truth, whether of religion or anything else worth having.

I venture to think this not likely. It certainly is not an agreeable theory, at least for the slaves. There must be some broad, solid, unmistakeable ground for the unlearned to stand on; some food more plentiful and more wholesome than those crumbs from the rich man's table.

I put forward a few suggestions for others stronger and abler than myself to work out. They are thoughts which have been gathered during many years of a busy life, which I frankly admit has prevented me from trying to reach the scientific grapes, though it has brought recompences of its own which working men will understand.

If the grapes are sour, even foxes, as time goes on, develop; and in this enlightened nineteenth century are becoming bold or cunning enough to assert that their own pleasant woodland homes, and their own unrefined habits and diet are better. Do all starve who cannot get grapes? Are grapes the bread of life? We should like to know who passed the law that there is to be no more bread.

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THOUGHTS ON LIFE-SCIENCE.

I.

THE age of traditional beliefs is past. The old equilibrium has been suddenly destroyed, and from henceforth tradition, as such, will not successfully claim allegiance without being challenged. Railways and Telegraphs have to a great extent annihilated the barriers to communication, the nations and their thoughts have been all at once poured together; the elements of human life are in a state of solution; what wonder if, till they settle a little, much confusion, much guessing, much childish temerity under great names prevail? There are indeed barriers to the interchange of ideas, which no human invention can ever overcome. So long as man has a body

which ties him down to place, so long the progress must be necessarily slow. Nevertheless the power of Railways has comparatively put mankind in a new world.

In early times men only moved about in armies, destroying as they went, and therefore learning little; or in slow caravans, and therefore learning slowly. Thus whole countries were shut off from any appreciable intercourse with other countries. By degrees two great powers arose to counteract this; the power of Rome which provided roads over all the known world, so far bringing people closer, and which compelled them to come in numbers to the great world metropolis; and the power of Jerusalem, which after the scattering of the Jews brought every year natives of all countries up to that metropolis; the rigid exclusive Jewish bond of early days thus in later days turning into a great network of intercourse. There was a third influence also at work which contributed more than anything else perhaps to permeate the nations with channels, unlikely as it seemed, nay antagonistic to this, at first—slavery. In ancient times, when

princes might be slaves, the enormous number of men and women of all countries and of all ranks originally, who were slaves, supplied throughout the world a vast machinery for passing intelligence on. At the epoch when all these causes were most actively at work, Christianity appeared, and made its way amidst great conflicts of thought and feeling; and from that period to this, the adjustment of the new elements has been going on. Heathenism in its old sense has perished. All the modern nations of Christendom, with whom the power and knowledge of the world now rests, began their lives in the shock of the fierce pouring together of the old heathenism, of Christianity, and of the uncivilised but strong-natured northern tribes. With the exception of America, the early history of which is quite exceptional, no Christian nation has begun its national life as Christian, and no Christian nation is yet dead. But the world seems to have got to the end of the epoch which began with the great mixture of elements at the downfall of the Roman empire. Hitherto all things have gone on as they then began, without any fresh impulse

or change of the main conditions. Now suddenly the whole world is poured together again.

Politically it is not difficult to see the direction in which some of the most important influences will work. But the phases through which men will have to pass, the strange combinations and abortive struggles which this confluence of minds may produce, are quite beyond conjecture. One thing only is certain; that the knowledge and ignorance, the good and evil, the thoughts and feelings of mankind are by this wonderful increase of intercourse dashed together in a great inundation without the least warning or preparation; and a sea with all its waves, and turmoil, and fulness, and movement, has taken the place of quiet pools of out-of-the-way life, and isolated rills of knowledge.

In this general letting loose there is inevitably much waste and confusion. It may, and most likely will, take many centuries, perhaps many tens of centuries, to bring practice and belief out of this whirlpool into fair equilibrium again, so that each shall more or less find its own proper level. In this great work of the present

day and the displacement of traditional ideas it has seemed no useless task to look steadily at what has happened, to take stock as it were of man's gains, and to endeavour amidst new circumstances to arrive at some rational estimate of the bearing of things, and in a calm spirit, neither fearful, nor too hopeful, to examine the task before us, to examine the instruments and the means at our disposal, to examine our strength, and to examine also whether this novelty of mingling and meeting finds man himself so utterly new to it and without guide as at first sight might be thought; so that the limits of what is possible at all events may be clearly marked out for ordinary persons, and in this great fair and throng of claimants no one may be in danger of being bewildered, or when he sees a conjurer mistaking him for a god.

II.

WORDS are the main instruments used by man for carrying on his great work of communicating thought and knowledge. Everything in very common use becomes changed by the contact with all sorts of uses, gets blunted as it were, and loses somewhat of its finest power. And fresh kinds of work often require fresh tools, or, if the old are taken, require them to be tested and treated differently. Words have not been free from this necessity. Their power is very striking; man can do nothing without them. Their variety at first sight appears infinite; but nevertheless what every one makes use of will partake largely of the imperfections of such universal use. Not least they will suffer from the intense familiarity which seems to make them known when nothing perhaps but the merest outside is known; as men speak of knowing one another when they only mean that

they are familiar with the appearance of each other, or some such trifling outward acquaintance. The new conditions of modern life are startling; the manner in which swift communication has set all thoughts, feelings, prejudices, beliefs, floating, as it were, imperatively demands some sort of careful inspection of the old instruments, most of all of words. They have done glorious work in many ways; but a greater strain than ever is being laid on them, can they bear it? It seems hard to believe that these immortal, winged messengers, as they have been called, with all their marvellous energy, and seeming variety, are most halting, imperfect pretences as soon as they pass beyond a very definite limit. Yet this is only too true, and is capable of very distinct proof. We are met at the very threshold of this investigation by the fact, that words come out one by one, and many are wanted to produce a whole: they are separate pieces, and must be put as it were stone by stone into their places to make the building. This at once gives a clue to judge what kind of work they can do. Words can do all part-work; all work capable of being done bit by bit. This kind of

work divides into two main branches, teaching and attack. Under the head of teaching, every kind of thought-conveying between willing minds is intended to be understood; and under the head of attack every kind of thought-conveying that has as its object to conquer or punish.

Words can teach, for they put ideas one by one piecemeal, and this is wanted in teaching. The mind requires time to take in one part before the next comes, and then time again, and so puts together by degrees a perfect whole, and can go back and recover any portion that has been dropped on the way. How vivid are the images that can pass between mind and mind in teaching; how bit by bit thought is put out, illustrated, and cleared; how varied the pictures can be, how subtle the feelings, that the magic touch produces or evokes, as a skilful speaker or writer little by little unfolds himself in prose or poetry, and reaches the mind of another. And the mind receives it, losing some and keeping some, and makes it its own property, puts it out again new-shaped, or as it was before, and adds fresh meshes to the great thought-net which spreads over the

world in words. What a wonderful curiosity shop the mind of a great man would appear if we could but see it. We should see it full of precious bits gathered from all generations and all races; here a fragment from a heathen of old like a bit of polished marble, there the last new floating leaf of modern talk, crumbs of children's prattle, axioms of sages, morsels from friends and enemies, all lodged there by words. Then side by side with these strangers, would be housed all he has observed himself on flood and field, in cities and solitudes, gatherings from forest, hill, or river, flowers, and birds; a strange medley, ready to put on word-shape at any time. And yet this is a most dead comparison; for all these images and thoughts, wherever they come from, have a kind of life, and are taking new bodies perpetually, and streaming forth in countless swarms of winged words, as the great poet so well called them, into new air with new vitality, so that man, like a fountain, is tied indeed to one spot if the eye judges, but is for ever flowing forth, passing into other states of being, here, there, everywhere, with a boundless capacity of change,

renewing and renewed, over wide domains of earth and air with which he seems to have nothing to do. Man lives in his words, and his words have untold power in teaching.

But the power of words in attack is not less. Then how trenchant, how battering, how compact they fall, smiting like sharp swords, or heavy as clenched fists; enemy meets enemy with matchless weapons. And the skilled combatant, who glories in this skill, moves amongst his peaceful neighbours like a duellist of old, admired and envied for his deadly power. See the lithe favourite of the literary world skimming like Camilla[1] over the cornfields of thought, and the harvests of other men's work, with a foot so light that it barely touches, never rests upon them; skimming over the waves of bitter surging turmoil, and troublous hearts, and passionate resolves, gracefully self-poised; not deep enough in to believe, not deep enough in to disbelieve, absorbed in graceful display, or with

[1] Illa vel intactæ segetis per summa volaret
Gramina, nec cursu teneras læsisset aristas:
Vel mare per medium fluctu suspensa tumenti
Ferret iter, celeres nec tingeret æquore plantas.
VIRG. *Æneid.*

a myrtle spear dealing out graceful death, and winning place and power in Church and State by doing so. And all this is a triumph of words. Others again, like gladiators, step into the great amphitheatre of letters to immolate all they meet for the amusement of the idle-hearted. Earnest faith of any kind will always find the pleasure-seekers ready and the amphitheatre of the world crowded to see unwelcome zeal set for torture in the midst.

This then is clear, words can teach, and words can attack. Wherever good thought-work can be done piecemeal, they are effectual; but wherever a complete view requires to be presented at once, they are not effectual. Let it be assumed that a perfect master of words is using them in the most perfect way, what are the facts? He has to put out his words one by one, in order to make his sentences, before any view is given; and numbers of the single words also are very complex in meaning, or have entirely different senses to different minds. Take as an example the common word "man." Any argument on man's corporeal nature must for the time leave

out to a great degree his intellectual and spiritual life. But the speaker does not necessarily mean to imply by so doing that a man is nothing more than flesh and blood. The word can mean everything, known or unknown, which is comprised in the nature of the being it stands for; but it is utterly impossible to know at any time what it does stand for with any great accuracy. Who, when he writes the word "man," implies to another mind *every time* that exact relative proportion of spirit, soul, and body, and each of these with all its complex subdivisions that he means himself, if indeed he does mean anything exact; or the dim shifting outline of misty haze which perhaps represents the word in his mind, if he did but know it? There is scarcely an after-dinner discussion which does not in the first four sentences introduce terms and expressions which very often it would take a life-time to clear between the speakers, even if some of them by any culture could ever be got to understand them clearly. But all the while they think they are using the same words. And this is the case with all important terms; seeming-single as they are, they

are many-sided and many-sensed, changing and shifting with the speaker. In fact they are just like the fairy tent in a nutshell of the old story. One moment a nutshell is seen, the next a tent which holds five thousand men, then a nutshell again. Or, worse still, each spectator sees tent or nutshell, part or all, shifting as the sentences move on, and the words expand or contract invisibly at the pleasure of speakers and hearers, or very often independently of the conscious knowledge of either; each thinks they are seeing and hearing the same thing, though one uses only a nutshell, the little commonplace outside of the word, and the other the great army-tent full of living power, all or part of the wonderful inner life which the nutshell outside holds. This then is a great limitation in language; the same words have different meanings to different people. In fact, more often than not the words are being used in various senses, and frequently convey no exact meaning to either party. Moreover, if words were clear they can only put out complex ideas bit by bit. But the mind does not act in this way. Very often the architect mind has the

idea which it intends to display before the minds of others all before it at once, or nearly so, and does not work by fragments slowly joined. But this is a very serious defect. It amounts to this, that it is absolutely impossible *to force* conviction on a hostile mind. There will always be even in the worst cause tenable parts to take refuge in, and very often every part taken separately will be tenable. There is nothing an enemy cannot mistake but the multiplication table and its family. If it is admitted that conviction would follow proof, still nothing but the whole put in one great picture-stamp would be proof; and as that is impossible, the enemy cannot be forced out of his erroneous beliefs. As well hunt a rabbit in a wood with a stick, as try to kill a lie in a hostile mind by force of words.

But even this ineffectual, gasping incompleteness of words would matter little if a lie was a lie, and truth, truth; each separable into its elements: but there is no chemical power claimed as yet which will precipitate a lie when held in solution: and every lie worth anything, or that has any chance of a prolonged existence, has a

large proportion of truth mixed up with it. So as words are many, and each word may have different senses, and each sentence may have many parts, and by no possibility can a whole be put at once in one great picture, however unintentionally a complete wilderness may be produced as far as any compulsory effect on the mind's eye goes. And in this wilderness a lie may be ensconced. How catch it, when like a nimble devil it runs backwards and forwards, hiding in the truths amongst which it has got; pushing forwards now one and now another to cover itself, and incessantly shifting ground from hiding-place to hiding-place, in tricksy defiance? And it does not matter whether the lie is in the narrative itself, or in the mind of the reader who wishes to believe only part of what he reads. But even this is not the worst case: this implies an absolute falsehood somewhere. But in the worst lies there is not. A thoroughly skilful lie is only truth out of proportion, dislocated. Every part of the false whole which is finally produced, will be as a part true; but put side by side with another part to which it is not fitted, the relative value of the two

being false. Now every virtue and excellency is only a virtue and excellent by being justly proportioned and balanced[1]. Justice without mercy is cruelty, mercy without justice is weakness; and so on. Moreover in all practical life a balance has to be struck amongst many circumstances, and what is best under those circumstances to be taken; another case of relative proportion. Due relative proportion, in fact, is the definition of practical truth. The same wine is a sovereign remedy or a deadly poison, according to the proportion observed in the use.

Hence the statement made above becomes eminently true, that in a good falsehood every part, taken by itself, will be true; but that the combination of true parts in wrong proportion composes a masterly lie.

Many novels owe their interest to this kind of lie, and are an unsuspected poison in consequence. The characters are angelic, pure, or interesting, under circumstances that must of necessity produce the direct contrary; and the readers too often transfer this falsehood to their ideas of real

[1] The Bishop of Peterborough. Sermon.

life and their own actions, and suffer for doing so. This kind of lie is very fatal. For if word-work is piecemeal and part-work, no lie in which all the parts, taken separately, are true, can be shewn to be false to an unwilling, hostile, or self-worshipping mind. So the vast area between teaching and fighting, which is occupied by controversy, seems to be full of active healthy effort; though controversy, as far as it is a battle, is nothing but a sham, if the object is Truth. There is no power whatever in words to knock out truth. Truth cannot be fought out. As far as truth results from a fight, so far it results from the non-fighting feelings, from the willingness, the candour, the suppressed love, that existed in the combatants, and were not stopped or marred by the fighting. Every blow is a blow against truth, from whichever side it comes; that is to say, if the intention is to convince an antagonist. Certain conditions are required to produce conviction. Every one is lord of his own mind, and no earthly power, as a force, can get to the mind of another. The mind is impregnable to force. And words, the great instrument of man, are in-

capable of any complete force-work. What man of experience has not found out that as soon as people begin to give nonsensical reasons, so far from the case being won on account of the ease with which the reasons can be overthrown, it is hopeless on that very account. When the wolf standing up stream tells the lamb down stream that he muddies the water, it is a bad case for the lamb, though it is easy to refute the assertion. Proof, however plain, cannot take an unwilling, irresponsible mind by storm, and words can never be certain of making proof plain. Add to this exasperated self-love, and it is not difficult to see how certain it is that conviction cannot follow on a word-war; since, first of all, you are not sure of knocking your adversary down; secondly, he cannot be knocked down unless he likes it; and, lastly, when he is knocked down, he must be grateful for being knocked down.

It follows from all this that words can teach and words can attack: but that both the nature of words themselves, and the nature of the subjects to be dealt with, and the nature of the persons engaged, all combine to make it im-

possible to force intellectual proof on the mind. The practical consequences of this, if admitted, will be very important, and extend over an area hitherto supposed to belong to words indisputably, the area occupied by all books written to convince mankind by their force of argument and attacking power. The fatal incapacity of words to give a full picture-stamp at once, and the parallel readiness of the human mind to seize any loophole rather than be driven into conviction, both contribute to render words absolutely useless, nay, pernicious, as soon as the attempt to coerce thought begins. It is only a duel in which skill of fence is everything both to combatants and spectators, and victory, not truth, the prize of the contest. Like war it may sometimes be impossible to avoid, but it is a great evil and waste. Logic can only teach how to use the instrument in the best way, it cannot convert the instrument into what it is not. The body is not a greater bar to free flight, than the piecemeal and uncertain character of words is to free communication of thought. Hence all the boasts of demonstrative truth are false, if by demonstrative

truth is meant, truth which must intellectually compel belief. Apart from mathematics, that subject is a very narrow, or a very superficial one, which admits of being dealt with in this precise rigid way. No subject connected with man and his destiny admits of such precision. The attempt at precision and argument of severe and flawless hardness, convicts the user either of shallow and narrow views of his work, or ignorance of his instruments for work, or disregard of the laws of mind with which he has to deal. All controversial writing, so far as it is antagonistic, if it is put out on the pretext of intending to overcome the opponent, is a mistake or a crime.

Controversy can wound enemies, can encourage friends, can win partizans, but it cannot build up truth or really advance true life. Words cannot do the force-work in this sense, and, if they could, minds will not be knocked even into paradise. How much would never be written, if this was felt to be certain; if there was no trust in fighting words. How utterly different would be the frame of mind in which subjects would be approached if there was a certainty that building

up gently, instead of knocking down strongly, was the only intelligent way of proceeding. No one can study thought, and the subjects of thought, and words, without being certain of the fatal incapacity of words as means of transmitting thought fully. The want of a thought-stamp which at a stroke should impress a perfect image becomes painfully evident. Some guess may be formed of what may be possible in another state of existence from the pictorial volume of meaning a good metaphor will sometimes convey. Take for instance Anderssen's wonderful creation of the devil's distorting mirror. Who has not felt a thousand times the hopelessness of arguing or dealing with people, who from some moral defect have made up their minds wrongly? Who has not seen over and over again men and women with almost every good quality and brilliant endowment, and some little flaw of character marring all? And who has not tried in vain to express this curious hopelessness and character-hitch in any number of words? But Anderssen's devil's glass, which distorted all things, shattered and shivered, floating in impalpable atoms through the

world, each atom with its perfect distorting power, and each atom able to stick in a human heart and pass its distorted images into it, does the thing at once. All the great and varied picture of the character-flaw, the uselessness of argument, the hopeless though trifling check to truth, is at once stamped in one picture-word, as soon as two persons knowing that story and feeling it can say of a third he has the bit of glass in his heart. It tells everything. We can imagine a language used by highly intelligent beings in which every complex idea should be represented by a picture-word, and given at once by one accurate thought-stamp. But as a fact all the great human ideas are complex, and none of the words accurate thought-stamps. So word-discussions between hostile minds about truth are useless or worse for the simple but sufficient reason that words won't do the work. In a more familiar way, how many jokes are exceedingly facetious at the moment with their proper accompaniments all present; but many a man has wondered and been vexed in repeating a joke to feel how flat and prosy it fell, simply because the picture was

wanting and could not be instantaneously produced, and the picture gave it its power. This want of true direct communication between minds, and the very imperfect means at our disposal of impressing full and real images even when our own perceptions are full and real, ought never for a moment to be lost sight of by any intelligent man. At all events it is impossible to state too strongly the utter uselessness of the tools in man's hands for much of the work he attempts to do with them. Man's body and man's words are equally ill adapted for unencumbered flight. No mind is so unbiassed as not to be liable to evade disagreeable statements, no subject which touches on life can be set out with logical and exact demonstration. Trim garden walks and walls are out of place as soon as a narrow artificial range is passed. They do not belong to kingdoms and worlds. Words cannot do more than roughly hint the truths we feel or know to friendly hearts. The limits imposed on man by the nature of things cannot be disregarded. It is of no use leaping into the air because we wish to fly, unless nature has given wings. The first

step in true knowledge is to know, and, knowing, not to conceal either from ourselves or others, what words can do, and what they cannot do; to admit humbly their fatal defect as thought-stamps. An erroneous view of words is error everywhere, for all knowledge passes through words.

III.

FIGHTING, then, in the service of truth, is an impossibility; because words, though very well able to fight, cannot reach by fighting that which must be reached before truth is the result. The heart-fortress is impregnable to force. It is either a mistake or a crime to fight for truth. The great limitations of language are of paramount importance, since all our main communication passes in language. First of all vast numbers of single words, perhaps we may say all, have many meanings. Grass, to a botanist, a painter, a farmer, a poet, a moralist, &c. conveys an entirely different idea. This is often unsuspected. Secondly, the necessity of putting out ideas piecemeal is a fatal bar, a law of nature, which prevents words from doing real work unless there is already communion of spirit between the speakers. So it comes to pass that words, our only means

of communicating thought, have no power whatever to force truth on an enemy. Thought cannot be put out in its broad completeness, so as to be seen and felt, accepted or rejected, as a whole; for words cannot do it. This incompleteness especially applies to all questions of relative proportion and comparative value. But every question touching life powers and their workings is of this character. And yet life powers and their workings concern man more closely than any other subject. The comparative value of life, whether we speak of the principle and origin of life, or of its working and practice, comes home to every heart. It is obviously not pleasant to be told after a career of honour and success that the power which has given the greatness is a poor thing, and the greatness a delusion. Few men have the courage to admit that their lives have been a mistake. It takes little to write it, but much to believe it; for there is no second life in which the experience of the first can improve on and redeem the past. And who can wonder that nature shrinks from the conviction that the one life given has been to a great extent wasted, and fights

hard against the bitter conclusion that the glory and greatness which have been won or worshipped are a mistake too? Yet no less an issue than this underlies most serious controversy. The stake is great and can only be lost or won once, and very often has been lost or won before the immediate question discussed has set the combatants by the ears. It is difficult in such cases to be calm. Very much apparent calmness is only the result of practised gladiatorial nerve and experience, not of disinterested love of truth and charity. But questions of real interest deserve quiet treatment. And much more might be done if we knew at starting what we can do and cannot do with the tools at our disposal. Something in the previous chapter has been attempted in this way towards clearing the functions of words and shewing that they are useless in dealing with hostile minds, and therefore ought not to be employed in hostilities if truth is the object. Something will now be attempted towards clearing in the same kind of way another portion of the subject, so that some simple basis may be arrived at in a practical way about the functions of mind and lan-

guage, which may serve to determine the manner of employing both.

Now it is a very curious fact that meets us on the very threshold of such a practical inquiry, that the mind of man is able to accept and in a certain sense grasp, nay must accept, certain great truths, which nevertheless it is utterly unable to comprehend or explain; falling back dull, deadened and broken-winged, as soon as it attempts to measure itself with them. All must admit, all must fall back baffled from the great glass precipices of Infinity, Eternity, Self-existence, Creation. But this is a startling, a sobering fact: an illimitable ignorance imprisons man by being illimitable. There can be no door to open for him where there is no bound, out of which he might pass and know. Not only powers fail, but the very conception of powers and possibility fails to do more than shew absolute immeasurable failure to reach a single point of what is so plain as a statement to all. Infinity, Eternity, Self-existence, Creation. The inquirer begins by finding himself in a vast universe, amongst countless worlds which existed before he had intelligence; which

will continue to exist after he has gone, as they have done before he came; which while he remains are in no wise affected by his knowledge, great or small, of the manner in which they exist. He looks around him awhile, and begins to use words, and speaks of Infinity, Eternity, Self-existence, Creation, and like expressions, and soon forgets, if he recognized it at first, that these words are only ways of saying, "I am ignorant here, my mind permits me to see a beginning, to state a truth, which it cannot from its nature in the slightest degree understand." No knowledge is so valuable to a true mind as the knowledge of its ignorance, especially when that ignorance is an ignorance of the very starting points and beginnings of the subject to be considered. It is often stated that no chain is stronger than its weakest link; a fallacy, for it is a practical fallacy, of the most pernicious kind. If all strain can be taken off the weak links, a chain may be as strong for the purpose it is applied to, as its strongest links. Better still, if the challenger can persuade his antagonist to grasp the chain some links beyond the unsafe point, and get him then to test it

link by link onwards. And this is done in many instances, perhaps it is not too much to say, in most instances, when questions are contested which involve, if fairly dealt with, the great problem-words of Eternity, Creation, and others, which seem to mean something understood, but which really are the names of barriers and terms for total ignorance. This ignorance must be admitted, with all its consequences, by every candid inquirer who is going to discuss any portion of life-science. For the false portion is very often out of sight. And a house on sand may be far stronger than a house on rock if the contractor can bind the clerk of the works only to examine the masonry and pass judgment on the shapely rows of hewn stone, fitted, it may be, with consummate skill, without a flaw from basement line to roof. Two things are evident: that words from their piecemeal character are most impotent instruments to work with, perpetually liable to hide instead of declare truth; and this most of all where it is of the greatest importance they should not mislead, in the statements of incomprehensible truths which they pronounce so glibly; and secondly, that

every inquiry must begin with an admission of boundless ignorance on the part of man of the main cardinal facts, for such they may be called, from which the inquiry starts. The true heart will feel, and humbly admit before beginning, that every discovery, either in the world of thought, or the world of matter, is a nothing, compared with the power he is trying to search out; and that man's body is not more an atom when weighed against the material universe than his mind is, compared with the intelligence which surrounds him everywhere; in the midst of which he moves, totally incapable of altering the smallest condition of the life of the smallest creature, totally unmissed, when in a few short years he drops out of the place he has held in it. Tools almost useless for the work, and powers to wield them of no higher order, are two facts not to be disregarded by any true mind which is going to make an attempt to do the work. For these facts of creation must be accepted if any real progress is to be made, and the observance of them may be the cause of very real progress in most humble hands. A villager may guide a great king if he

knows the country. The most powerful army may be ruined by taking a wrong turn; so entirely dependent is the greatest strength, intellectual or physical, on the simple facts of nature. To despise this is not wisdom. Even real power of a striking kind may be a very subordinate means in life-work. Men cannot fly, though birds can: so utterly distinct is power or the want of power from true pre-eminence. Yet what would not science say if she could give us eagle wings? But if mere power, as such, can be so little worth, how utterly noxious must be the result of making believe to have powers which do not exist. In bodily things this is called madness. That man is mad who thinks he flies, and passes his life in fancied flying. To use the mind in this manner, disregarding what the mind can do, and what the instruments of mind can do, is not less madness, though it may be less evident. The mind finds itself provided, if it will examine, with most halting, ineffectual powers of expression; and its instruments, words, are for very much work good for nothing. And its own inherent powers are equally good for nothing when matched against the great infinities,

which dawn upon it as existing the moment thought begins. There must be a great hidden truth in these mysterious premises of human life.

IV.

A CHILD travels on a railroad under a serene conviction that railroads are one of the conditions of earthly life, or a little later, under the same conviction in a different form, knowing that they are the work of men, but still thinking it quite natural, and a matter of course, that men should be clever enough to make them. All the long centuries of thought and experiment which have culminated in the steam-engine are to such a mind—nothing. But is the case different when we come to men, even educated men, men of the highest intellectual culture, as soon as their own special subjects are left? What knowledge have most people about their own bodies? If disease and accidents were eliminated from the world, little or no inquiry would take place on this subject. Everything of daily occurrence is treated as a matter of course, unless some check or inconvenience draws attention to the need of know-

ledge. So it comes to pass that the last things understood are the things everybody thinks he understands, or receives as not wanting understanding at all. Universal use and universal acceptance are too often walls of rock in the way of improvement. There is a sort of self-satisfied power in the use that is apt to resent as an insult any suspicion that the thing so freely used, the slave of our will, is beyond our jurisdiction anywhere, and lord perhaps of an inner circle in which it rules undisturbed, while we its seeming masters stand outside. Of the thousands who keep dogs, who has really taken home thoroughly the fact that the hairy form so familiar to the eye is nevertheless the habitation of an utterly unknown life? Now there is a curious power that is both servant and master of the human world, a power neither living nor dead, a power full of startling contradictions, a riddle not easy to state, but easier to state than explain. We call this power "speech," and its instruments words. And we think them common enough, as indeed in a certain sense they are. They are as we have seen tools of mind, and some of their properties and

uses have been stated. But what do we really know of them? Science answers promptly that they are undulations of air, and talks of laws of sound, and states the facts observed, and tickets them, and goes off to something else, as if a door had been opened, and an explanation given, instead of a door shut, and the truth behind it. What is air? and sound? Why should the wind which dries a puddle, or overthrows a tree, by any conceivable movement or pressure be other than wind in motion, or pressed? Ex nihilo nihil has long been an axiom of science; air therefore, as long as nothing is added to it, remains air. How comes it then that the movements of a box called a mouth, without adding anything that can be seen, touched, weighed, measured, or tested in any way, should knock life and spirit-meaning into air, and that air thus made the vehicle of what can neither be seen, touched, weighed, measured, nor tested in any way, should rush into a twisted cavern called an ear and there deposit its strange, impalpable, burdenless burden of thought in the thought-reservoir of another mind? What is it that is in the air when the air is words which was

not in the air before? Science answers, nothing. Yet there is what we cannot tell though we feel it, there is a birth from man's mind, and like his mind graspless and viewless, no instrument can in any way reach it. Nay, it is not only the speaking of fresh words that has this strange power of mind, the same words with the emphasis altered convey entirely different ideas. What is emphasis that it should act thus? Take the sentence: "You gave me my opinion." The meaning alters according as the stress is laid on any word more than another. But stress does not make air different from air. What is it that thus defies our search? Is it living, is it dead? If it is living, how comes it that the words themselves perish in a moment and are feelingless, common air? If dead, how comes it that they burn with thought, touch hearts, teach, rule, pass on from life to life always in communion with life, and sometimes, once spoken, never again drop out of heart-sovereignty? We may indeed say that human life and human feeling animates air, and passes into other lives and feelings by doing so. True, but this is no nearer an explanation than

the simple statement that words are a strange power. What is it passes, and how? What is human life in itself? what is it, in this power of passing out, without being diminished, into external matter, without increasing it, whilst all the time we feel that it is a new creation?

Who shall answer this? It is a mystery, in which by a perpetual acted parable we get nearer perhaps than we ever shall in any other way to the knowledge of our ignorance of the great unknown nature of life and spirit. For in this daily wonder we do see, we do know, that common air, remaining all the while common air, of the same weight, composition, density, as before, suddenly becomes instinct for a moment with life, is made a connecting bridge between two different life-fountains or more, passes life across to life, we know not how, yet we know it is so, as well as we know anything; and thus, though we are infinitely far off from being able to make an independent living being, we become assured by this strange tying together of thought and matter, in which each keeps quite distinct, of a life-power within us able to put a sort of life into that which before

had none, and which shows no sign of having it by any change of structure. This may lead us to a dim far-off conception of the infinity of ignorance that lies between us and the knowledge of spirit in its subtler essence. At least it must make us know the broad distinction between life and matter. We must see the curious power by which mind, intelligent life, is entirely independent of the laws of the material world in its essential nature, though it is made known to us by matter. It acts on matter as a superior, and whilst adding nothing to it, diminishing nothing from itself, entirely alters the whole character of the matter it deals with, and is felt as a great and paramount power, known, recognized, obeyed, without giving the slightest indication of its presence which any material organ or instrument can bring to an account. Perhaps this knowledge of the existence of intelligent life, this distinction between life and matter, and the marvellous creative power of life with its impalpable eluding of grasp is still better seen when we take words in their petrified form of writing. For here the life-link is farther off still. What is

the existence, the whatever-you-please-to-call-it, which travels across four thousand years out of the mind, say, of Moses to us, and speaks freshly to you and me? Oh, there is none, you are only dealing with symbols, answers fact-science. Very well, so be it. But symbols of what? What part of Moses comes to us in this way? What is the original germ? Do words symbolize his hands, his feet, his tongue, or his brain? Are those black crooked shapes imitations, similarities, pictures, anything of anything, that can be put into visible form, and seen, and weighed, and measured? Do the characters of the Hebrew Bible as such contain any conceivable element of life? What then do they contain? What is it, reader, you are reading now? Very wonderful are these mind-waifs, these floating thoughts on the stream of time, a ghostly band on material rafts, visible spirit-forms, where the form has no natural relation to the spirit it bears, so familiar, and so baffling as soon as we endeavour to fix their exact being and whereabouts. The simple fact is plain enough, that the immaterial thoughts and feelings of man do launch themselves and travel

in this way, are let loose and set adrift with a strange life-germ of their own, But that the mind should be able to catch a wave of air, and ride on it in this nondescript way, or seize on letter-shapes and make them do its bidding so curiously and fully as it does, this may be plain as a fact, but how much further do we get in the endeavour to find out the nature of words or of mind? Or if we assert, as is true, that this word-nature is only one form out of many by which mind declares itself, that is another fact stated of word-nature, but nothing more; a fact which rather serves to throw light on all material shapes than on the words themselves. When man puts his mind-birth into a painting, or a building, or a tune, nay, when he makes an earthenware dish, a broken fragment of that dish a thousand years hence tells as truly of mind employed as the most glorious poem or building can do. Every shape made by man is a language more or less imperfect. All form is spirit speaking: all is the external manifestation of life; acting, or that has acted. And if this is the case of the meanest work of man, so that a polished flint becomes

the strongest evidence thousands of years after the hand that polished it has crumbled into dust, how can man who reasons on this withhold the same conviction of a mind-birth made evident in every form organic, or inorganic, which meets him in these worlds? If the forms did not make themselves, it must be so. If matter however subtle never moves unless it is set in motion, whence came the motion which has produced so many worlds and so many things on the earth-world, each and all in accordance with an intelligent plan? If all shapes given by man tell of mind, and intelligence speaks in every work of his, the same must hold good in the other shapes we see in which intelligence speaks, and all form must be in a fashion animate, either really so, as being the casket of life in living creatures, or symbolically so, as expressive of life, a speech of God, a language by which He declares Himself to beings incapable of seeing Him in other ways.

Thus we are brought inevitably to the conclusion, that material form is nothing else but intelligence making itself known outwardly, and that all we see is a language appealing to the

senses, one vast ceaseless speech of unseen spirit-power moving, or forming, or having formed what else would be still, or non-existent, making use not only of air, but of every kind of matter, to declare its will, just as man makes use not only of air, but of stone, wood, colours, and other matters in architecture, painting, sculpture, music, and is not confined to words for his speech. All that declares intelligent mind is language, and all matter is a speech. All of it is the "*God said*" of Creation! The theory of beauty rests on this truth as its first principle. Beauty is the expression of the mind of God seen through a material medium. All we behold is beautiful in proportion as it is expressive of mind, and of noble mind; although from the infirmity of man's judgment it comes to pass that mere shape and form, which satisfies the eye, is often ranked higher than it deserves, because it is appreciated more easily, whilst beauty of expression being less gross, is not understood excepting by subtle and educated feeling. This is the case in what we are pleased to call the inanimate creation, when man is reading mind in works of mountain and sea, of forest,

plain, and river. The gladness or the gloom gives a soul, as it were, to the earth-landscape, breathing in tracts of light and shade across the varying scene. Gentle presences, as of mercy, seem to pass amongst the noon-day hills, and linger on their slopes, filling the hollows of the earth with grace, and softening the mood of fire-smitten crags. Man looks, and his spirit answers to spirit, and the more perfect, the more humbly pure the receiver is, the more completely he draws in the message of glorious spirit-power, and calls it beautiful, and interprets the handwriting of the supreme intelligence. But this will be the case still more in the realms of life; in that higher world, where matter is a servant of servants, there the patient spirit watches and waits, till love unriddles its great secrets, and makes forms seem beautiful which are to grosser, prouder minds common and base. Love pierces behind the veil, and gains something of that vision at last, which will belong to a perfect world, in which every shape will be true, every form declare its message clearly, and be what it seems to be, whilst every eye and ear will read and interpret all aright;

not deceived, as here on earth, by lying types of form and sound, and lying blemishes of eye, and ear, and heart, but seeing expression of noble qualities exactly given, and able to understand what they see. Still even here on earth much is done. Beauty is expression of life; not varying with the judgment, or want of judgment of the spectator, but a true quality independent of man's opinion. In its lowest type it is mere outward delicacy of form, the lines that make shape, and are almost empty of life-expression, then it rises through all ranges of capacity of expression, and of expressive living speaking faces where feeling high and pure shines through, till it culminates in the idea of the glorified heavenly beauty, in which all sense of mere form, as form, is lost; and "the countenance is as the sun shineth in his strength;" and where rays of light and expression, as an atmosphere of glory, feeling, and power, defy any attempt to fix definite shape on it, or tie it down to an outline for the eye to seize; but the face speaks by a radiant effluence of visible mind. This truth, however, of mind expressing itself in outward form, and all outward form being a

language, brings us no further in our investigation of words and of life, excepting so far as enlarging the circle of language, and shewing us that all forms, like words, are higher or lower records of an intelligence quite distinct from the material used; of a power, which we see in ten thousand ways giving motion, shape, changing, governing; a power which in the case of words is the one solitary instance in which man brings something into the world which was not in it before in any shape, and leaves something in the world endued with a sort of vitality ungathered from any element which was in it before and incapable of being reduced to any element. Whereever we meet it, and we meet it everywhere, there is only one answer that every one must soon give about it, ignorance, total ignorance of the essence of life, coupled with an unqualified acknowledgment of its existence. What were these words before they were written, as the pen moved? What are they now, after they have been written and the pen has ceased to move? There is not a name in language for the kind of connection between the mind-waif and its shape,

or the kind of life a writing has, or the kind of death, if that is more expressive: it is a riddle without an answer, and so we leave it. But it is a riddle that plainly declares immaterial life.

V.

THE great distinction between life and matter, which appeared so plainly in words, meets us everywhere. Everywhere also man finds himself brought face to face with a vast machinery entirely independent of him. He is endowed with powers which enable him to see much; he is endowed with powers which enable him to make use of some of the things he finds, but he is not endowed with powers which make any thing of those possessions in the midst of which he stands really his own, or by which he can alter in the slightest degree the real nature of the least of them. "He brought nothing into the world, neither can he carry anything out." Nay more, when this intelligent and inquiring being turns to himself he is no better off there. He finds himself to be in body a world of action which goes on, whether he is waking or sleeping, quite independent of his will, which he can stop, hinder,

destroy, but not make or set going. He finds also a world of thought and feeling still more beyond his reach, which moves, though it is himself, in many ways quite independent of himself, and which he cannot explain. Fact-observation is all that is really his own, as far as that goes. And even in this he is by no means great. Catching facts, if we are to believe the facts of all who bring them to market, is a precarious game, and involuntarily suggests sometimes Dr Johnson's definition of fishing. This is a sorry position however for the masters of the world, these undeveloped deities, which the "tendencies" of science are producing. They are permitted to gather a few facts out of the countless heaps on every side. A man must begin with the necessary admission that he is a learner in a world of which he is a simple tenant, utterly unable to account for his being even that. Then as soon as he sets himself in earnest to search out and value his possessions, a search which he calls philosophy, the first-fruit of philosophy is, that philosophy appeals to reason as judge, and brings up its facts and discoveries to this tribunal. But what is reason? If reason is

not essentially different from matter, the appeal is absurd. How can a stock, a stone, or lightning, or a sunbeam, or the subtlest conceivable matter judge matter? If it is essentially different, then intelligent life in all its forms and dead matter are utterly distinct, as we have already seen them to be in air made words. And if any man confounds intelligent life with dead matter because the boundary line between some kind of life, the essence of which we know nothing about, and some kind of matter, the essence of which we know nothing about, is indistinct to us, it is useless to say another word, that man is either above reason or below it, in either case out of the human horizon. Now what has reason done? At first, if we go back in time, man went forth as a knowledge-king into the universe, and handled it for many many hundred years in this spirit of kingship from above. His philosophy, when this assumption was once made, in a truly philosophical spirit, followed out this assumption, and with wonderful power, in the most logical way, sent forth theory after theory partitioning out as with a conquering hand all the realms of the

subject-world. Unrivalled mental power and unrivalled industry were displayed, but at last after centuries of this web-spinning it was discovered that it led to nothing, and merely formed at best gay tapestry to hide the naked walls behind. But the premise open or suppressed of *μέτρον πάντων ἄνθρωπος* and man's sovereignty and absolute dominion demanded logically that man should proceed in this way; and philosophers who held this creed could not rationally do otherwise. Nevertheless a time came at last when this web-spinning did not satisfy, and the basis for future work was proposed of going forth and humbly observing facts, looking at the things around, testing them, questioning them, in a word learning of them, and thus man became a pupil in the material world. But curiously enough in the moral and spiritual world this was not the case, and heathen cobwebs still continue to be worshipped by the intellectual; and Aristotle, that matchless intellect-king, and men who proceed on the Aristotelian plan, still remain, or rise afresh, as authorities, where that plan is obviously most out of place. If the Ptolemaic system of astronomy

which made the earth the centre round which the universe revolved has long passed away, it is surely high time that this Ptolemaic system of Ethics which deals with man in the same way should join it in the same retirement and a new era of learning the facts of life-science begin. In the material world this has begun. Man does admit himself in some degree to be a pupil there. But whence comes the lesson presented to him? That lesson which he finds here when he comes, and leaves when he goes, as independent of him as if he had never existed? Is it not a contradiction to suppose that this ephemeral learner thus dropped into a world and out again is lord not only of his lesson-book, as he might be, but of the wisdom which gives him that eternal lesson-book? Or to put it in a different shape, can reason allow us to think that the intelligent power which is utterly baffled everywhere by arriving at barriers where all explanation ends in a name, is inferior on the one hand to the dead matter he investigates, or superior on the other to the original cause of all these intelligent and unintelligent beings, himself included, which he is able to discern existing? Fact-observation brings

man at once to the question of matter on the one hand, and intelligence on the other. The philosopher sees matter in every instance where it is simply matter requiring another impulse to set it in motion, however subtle the material essence may be, and also in every instance where it is simple, quite unintelligent, however subtle the material essence may be. Light and a stone are in this respect equal. These two great distinctions are universal. To advance a step further, no one believes air or ink to be alive because the air or the ink conveys an idea from life and is made a vehicle for a new power. Why should the vehicle in any other case be properly living because it is so intimately connected with life? The more so as in every instance the power of separating the body and the life is only too near at hand. Again, if science analyses air and tells us that air is oxygen, nitrogen, and carbonic acid gas, (substituting three names of unknown things for one) because it can separate air into these, by parity of reasoning science must tell us that all living organisms are matter and—it does not signify what they call it—a power unknown but separable and in its working

very evident. If we give the name of life to this we only mean, as far as science goes, that we recognize the existence of something at which our knowledge stops, and name that something, instead of confounding it with what it is not, and saying we do know what it is. Any argument against this statement based on the new properties and forms that result from chemical combinations need not be noticed, until it is proved that these properties and forms are distinct in kind from the matter which composed them, do not obey the same laws, and have an independent action of their own which science can destroy, but cannot analyse, or produce. There is nothing analogous to life in the changes of form in matter, or changes in material properties.

Fact-observation distinctly shows to the reason matter and intelligent life, these two. And Fact-observation has disclosed the existence of matter in an infinite number of worlds, obeying the same laws of matter; but man's knowledge of the phenomena of life is limited to the speck of creation on which he stands, the solitary column in the vast illimitable to which he is tied, and the forms of life existing there. Thus

we are brought face to face with another great limitation and a most humiliating truth, that the range of life within our reach to observe is small indeed. And small as it is, all mankind who have ever lived or are now living have been, and are, totally incapable of even examining the living creatures in any one acre of ground, nay cannot give a perfect account of one, much less construct one, or a cell, a protoplasm. We cannot master our own life and thoughts: stranger still the creatures below us are even more out of our reach. Every living creature we look on is an unknown world: no human being has ever known or ever will know an insect's thoughts, out of the myriads with which earth, water, and air teems. But what a limitation to knowledge this is. We know next to nothing of the working and conditions of life, absolutely nothing of life itself and its thoughts. It appears to some minds rather unphilosophic to speak so positively and theorise so widely on the world we live in till our basis of observation is larger, our powers co-extensive with it, and perhaps it may be added till we really know something of what we actually

can and do see. But as we have stated, we are very ignorant of what we actually can and do see. We simply know nothing of the actual life of any creature from the amœba up to man; we have but little idea whether the difference perceived by us in the outward manifestation of life is a difference in degree only or in kind, as far, that is, as science tells us or human intellect can discover. We know, it may be said, less than nothing of the thoughts and feelings of any creature except ourselves, and less than nothing of the life we are led to believe exists above us, as will be shown farther on. But not to know life is to know nothing. This is indeed a limitation. For if intelligent life is different from unintelligent matter as reason tells us it is, then it is self-evident that intelligence and life is not only different from, but above unintelligent dead matter at a distance baffling computation or expression.

Wherever there is life, intelligent life, there is a power capable of self-movement; wherever there is mere matter, matter however subtle, there is a force requiring something else to set it in motion. It is obvious at once that this inert non-movement

and want of intelligence makes matter purely instrumental, and that this immeasurable inferiority of matter places it entirely out of the question as worthy of knowledge for its own sake; we might as well investigate the nature of a spade or a plough. The life of a fly, for example, is higher and more precious than all the glory and beauty of innumerable starry worlds, which are only matter.

> "As life apparent in the poorest midge
> Is marvellous beyond dead Atlas' self[1]."

Anything, however vast or beautiful or strong, devoid of life is as compared with any real life absolutely valueless. I say "real life," because we are so ignorant of what life is in its essence, that we are unable to classify life scientifically, though able to see clearly on grounds apart from science that there is a classification. And in consequence, as knowledge, the knowledge of one fly nature, if we could get it, is more valuable knowledge than the knowledge of all inanimate worlds and forces. In other words, the whole material universe is in its nature so absolutely beneath

[1] Browning's *Poems*.

man as to be neither truth nor even knowledge to him in any high sense. The facts of a material world are not truth, if by truth is meant a higher reality worthy the nature of the inquirer, worthy the nature of a being endued with spirit-life, in a universe ruled by spirit-powers, amongst objects calculated to test and train spirit. So we are once more brought round to the fact that the material world, however useful a mastery over it may be, is utterly beneath man and worthless excepting so far as he is able to see spirit-power working it, or to make it do him service. What then is the province of science? Just this material world, this, and this alone; for the spirit-power cannot be weighed or measured or numbered, a bit more than a book can be learnt by putting it in the scales. And the value of this material world, this great instrument as compared with spirit-life is—nothing. Reason accordingly shows us that nothing belonging to the material world is worthy the name of truth to an intelligent being. For the high name of truth cannot rightly be given to the unvarying facts of the construction or action of the instruments in use, which are

nothing as soon as they are left to themselves and taken out of the intelligent hands of God or man. Reason also shows us that matter is utterly out of the question as a self-acting power, and *a fortiori* cannot have originated itself. Reason also shows us that the limit of our own knowledge of our own life and intelligence is very soon reached, and that we have not originated either matter or life, as we do not even understand the action of either, beyond a little analysing power as regards matter, and a few statements of how life acts as regards life. Reason also tells us that a living intelligence higher than any we can see must have originated all these lower things animate and inanimate, and when we have tasked our reason to the utmost we come back to the point the child starts from as soon as he thinks, an eternal, self-existent Creator.

VI.

LIFE and intelligence are ruling powers: if these are in imagination withdrawn, all is void, nothing remains. Matter cannot be conceived of as existing excepting by the fiat of intelligence. The Highest Intelligence must be the Creator of matter.

What then is involved in the idea of a Creator? Man, in thinking and speaking of a Creator, almost invariably speaks and thinks of a Maker, and confounds the two, misled by his own experience and habits. Let us examine this.

A maker uses materials which exist whether he uses them or not.

The materials were in one shape before he touched them, and are in another after he touches them. That is the only difference between the material and the thing made. A maker therefore can leave the materials which had a separate existence before he touched them to their equally separate existence after he has touched them. The ques-

tion of existence does not enter at all into consideration, and is in no wise affected in such cases.

But a Creator, by the Spirit of His power, calls into existence a new thing which did not exist before.

That we cannot understand this is immaterial. Worlds exist. It is self-evident that there must have been a calling them into existence. This new thing owes its existence to its Creator, not its shape only. It is not self-existent, for then it would not be created, but a creator of itself.

The existence it has received by the act of being created can only continue by that act being ceaselessly continued.

Created things therefore exist by a ceaseless act of creation, and the Creator cannot withdraw his active power, or the existence he gave by it would be withdrawn with it.

God therefore cannot leave His creation a moment; and a natural law merely means that the Almighty wisdom of God is so perfect that His creative will and His created forms are always in unison. A Law is God's acting will, and does not move God farther off.

Let us apply this practically. It has been asked, how can we pray for rain, when meteorology will soon be proved an exact science, moving by universal laws, unalterable by prayer? This is a good example of much of the slipshod claims of science, which are very distinct from its true discoveries. It is a most curious thing to note how men, whose glory is fact-observation and exactness, and whose axiom is, or ought to be, that the discoveries of to-morrow are perpetually enlarging the knowledge and correcting the hypotheses of to-day, are making themselves and their subjects synonymous for the seemingly opposite poles of the wildest dreams and the most positive dogmatism. Half the claims of science at the present day are cheques drawn on future ages to be cashed by this generation; a sort of forgery on the Creator. Now it is a sufficient answer to such a question as the one about rain to decline to answer it altogether, *till* the premise on which the question rests is secure. There never will be an exact science of the weather, is the first answer.

No one would deny that a general knowledge

of the general conditions under which given results take place, may be very attainable and very useful. Suppose we grant that in everything throughout the great world-machine this is, or will be, the case to the fullest extent. It only amounts to this: the world is, say, a steam-engine, *when* certain pistons move certain results invariably follow. The further rather important question remains, who? when? and under what conditions sets the pistons going? Or, granted that the pistons are set going, who? when? and under what conditions applies the force generated?

Again, all movements which fall under our observation are themselves resultants of various combinations of forces, and these again of others, the complexity of the problem increasing as it advances to an extent far beyond our limited powers to appreciate, much less to be able to calculate. And yet, before we can be said to have scientific knowledge even of the mere mechanical movements of this system, every force employed must be ascertained through every circle of cause and effect, all must be known and exactly measured. Even then it does not follow that with a per-

sonal creator ruling the vast machinery, we should be able to foretell coming movements from the uniformity of action that has hitherto followed on his word. But at any rate before this it is obviously against reason to attempt to do so.

Again, the movement may be invariable in direction, but its being quicker or slower may be the cause of infinite variation in the effect produced. Or the force generated may be invariable, yet an alteration in the straps or pulleys which apply the force may be the cause of infinite variation. Let it be granted that we are in the great engine-room of the universe, and see the engine distinctly moving with its invariable stroke, what is to prevent the machinery in the room above out of sight, the machinery which the engine moves, from having a changeful complexity of manufacturing power quite unconnected apparently with anything we see? What prevents for instance the same engine working in the engine-room in which we are and see it, from discharging stone, coals, water, corn, or anything else *ad infinitum* from the stores out of sight down on us?

To put this same question again in a some-

what different shape. Grant to the full the fixity of universal laws, nevertheless in this immense web of complicated law-movement, may it not very well be that without infringing or altering a single working law, the slightest disarrangement of the *balance* of forces might at once, working *by* law, alter part or the whole of all the actual application and its results in the great world-web: just as a finger pressed on a spider's web, without breaking a single thread, vibrates through the whole; and if that web was a world, would produce different phenomena at once in every region of it.

Again, What is meant by a Universal Law? Is it our conviction based on experience, that given effects always follow given causes?

This may be very true but it is also *qua* us very limited, as it supposes that *we* know the causes and effects, and *our* knowledge of cause and effect is obviously very far from universal. Thus a universal law only means that under limited conditions in a limited area certain things always happen as far as we know.

There are many scientific truths where, given

the cause, the effect is certain; but these causes and effects are a parenthesis contained in a larger world. Are we commensurate with all the worlds our reason tells us of, or leads us to believe in, or at least must make us admit our possible ignorance of, that we thus talk of universal laws, as if universal laws meant things which must happen? Observe too the region in which these universal laws hold good, in the movements namely of the heavenly bodies and material worlds, becoming difficult, doubtful, or non-existent precisely in the quarter where by theory we men ought most to be sure of them, on our own earth with its life. But we have before seen that knowledge which deals only with dead matter, however vast or beautiful, is so low in the scale as not to be worthy of the name of truth, or to be taken account of by spirit power dealing with spirit life. Certainly if there was no intelligent mind or feeling involved, it becomes at once, we may say, certain that a world of inorganic forces would be ruled by Almighty wisdom according to a plan so perfect that, given the first link, every other link should be invariable; we do see

something like this in the movements of the stars. But my reason tells me that there is intelligence and life, and that countless glorious worlds of matter cannot be put in the balance against one living spirit, nay against one fly. And reason has shown me by the aid of God's word, that the Creator Spirit has made all things, and never withdraws His active, intelligent, living powers from them. The intelligent living energy of God therefore is what is really meant by Law. Is the mind of A who tells us not to pray for rain, because rain comes by a universal Law, commensurate with the mind of God, that he should tell us so positively what God will or will not do? But if not, what is meant by the assertion that a scientific law cannot be altered? If God and A were the only two living intelligences, there might be some sense in such a statement; but when the element of life, and of life such as man's life, is brought into the material world, why should not the Almighty and Allwise Spirit King break up any number of worlds or Universal Laws! for the sake of it? the real benefit of one living spirit must outweigh all matter. Why should not

Elijah rule the rain, or Joshua the planetary system, if any spirit purpose is served by so doing? Why might not the great Creator Spirit alter every property of matter? Reason plainly tells us that the less must yield to the greater, worthless matter to precious spirit. What is a miracle, that babblers should so confidently assert that no miracle can take place? In one sense they are right. Changes in matter once created are not miracles. As soon as the mind heartily and truly takes in the great truth of a God Creator, Who by a ceaseless act of ever-present will keeps in existence that which He has created, from the smallest speck of dust to the highest form of life, at that moment reason tells us plainly that man, unless commensurate with the all-upholding will of God, cannot of himself assert that any phenomenon is a miracle, or any exercise of the acting will of God more wonderful, as far as he knows, than any other exercise of it. Reason tells us that the stone we hold in our hand, and the hand that holds it, must equally melt away and cease to exist if the creative act by which they exist is withdrawn. Reason tells us that to

alter in any way the nature of the stone or the hand, to make the stone swim, or the hand, when withered, stretch forth and be sound, is a much less thing than to make the stone a stone, and the hand a hand, in the first instance. To create is a miracle, to alter a thing created is no miracle for the Creator, even according to our narrow minds. Reason tells us that if there is any miracle it cannot be in any change of matter or material forces, or things created. It is no miracle for a man to build a house, altering thereby the arrangement of stone; or fire a cannon, altering thereby for a few seconds the inertness of iron; or to drive a horse, altering thereby the direction in which the living creature would move. It would be a miracle for a baby to do these things. Is God the Creator a baby that he lacks strength to alter the things He has created? Is God unable to control matter? Nay, God is not a God of the dead in this sense either: to alter dead matter is no exercise of power for the Living God. No change in matter is appreciable, much less wonderful, miraculous, compared with the original act of calling it into existence, and the continuance of that

act by which it remains in existence. Man must deny God, before he can look on a change of matter as a miracle, excepting so far as he means by the word, fresh evidence to his own poor intellect of divine power. There is no miracle in any other sense when the ever-present will of God changes or suspends existences which only exist because of that will.

To change the working of material forces is no miracle. Moreover how do we know that we see anything except very remote results, or ever get near the actual motive-powers at all? May not the Creator have in existence subtle agencies quite unknown and untraceable by human skill? The telescope and microscope have shown us things far beyond human ken unassisted by these means, which are now through these means within our reach; is it not a necessary induction, does not reason tell us, that as we find no limit as far as our means take us, therefore there are infinite ranges which no means can, or ever will, bring within our reach? If visible matter, matter that is capable of being made visible, is utterly hidden from the human eye unaided, but the philosopher by the possession

of an enlarged faculty is at once lifted into a new world of possible knowledge, how can he refuse to admit that a similar extension, and again a similar, would have the same result, and set him as much above his present self merely by increased sight, as his present self is above the poorest savage who wants his instruments? What must a being with such sight, or greater, think of philosophic man with his poor faculties, and his confident theories? And if this is the case with matter which all agree is subject to human observation, what are we to say of life-power? Who has seen life? But what is our knowledge if it is so soon stopped; if knowledge of matter is worth nothing, and in knowledge of life we know nothing? When we look at matter scientifically, we become aware that, solid as it seems, the meshes of a great net are to us a solid compared with the interstices in the densest matter to imaginable existences. And this material book of the Creator shows us at the same time the whole creation filled with a flood of unsuspected life; from the animalcule in the water, or the minute shell from the deep sea, invisible excepting to a

most powerful microscope, which nevertheless was formed by a creature living inside it with a life so complex in its instruments as to be capable of forming this shell which was its home, where it lived with channels of life in a body which fed on something smaller still, with a flood of life, I say, from this embodied thought, (for it is too small to be realised as a body) up through numberless gradations to man. And moreover we see, the more we become acquainted with the workings of things, very much of the machinery of this earth worked through living agency. Insects fertilise flowers; birds carry seeds, countless changes go on in earth and air and water through the movements of living creatures; coral islands are formed; man works. All this we know. Are we to suppose that this great flood of life pervades creation, steadily rising till it culminates in man, and that then the great gulf between man and God is empty of all life? Is this what reason would teach a reasoning observing being? Can a reasoning being see a perpetual gradation, a wondrous fabric of life rising over life as far as his power enables him to go; and, when his

power stops and can pass no higher, believe, because his power stops, that what he saw as long as he had power has come to a sudden stop too? Does a man believe that he is at the end of the earth because his powers do not allow him to move on? Or, is life to be active and employed everywhere as long as he sees it, and the moment he cannot follow, does all activity cease, even if he politely admits there may still be life? Reason tells us distinctly that between man and God there must be the same overflowing wave of life continued, that active energies more varied, fuller, more perfect than those between man and the atom-life of the shell beneath, mount upwards range above range, for ever and for ever. Reason tells us that this active life, like in kind of operation to the active life of man only higher, will pervade and rule all matter, so that we may well believe that it is no figure of speech which the Psalmist uses when he says of God, "He maketh His angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire;" or that tells of Christ "*rebuking*" the winds and the sea. But if so, what is there wonderful in these ever-present spirit-agencies and

intelligent wills, whilst working under God every material force, changing at any moment whether perceptibly or imperceptibly the direction of the material forces they wield; what miraculum would there be if every drop of rain is guided or shot through air by a living power? Our observation of facts, our experience and knowledge, bears out this theory quite as much as the observation of general uniformity (very imperfect in the earth-region where man is best qualified to master it) does the theory of non-intervention, and a God with nothing to do after some primal act of setting things going in a period too far off to signify, graciously allowed him by condescending philosophy. Does not reason, dealing with the facts before us, require us to acknowledge the utter nothingness of matter and its forces apart from life, and render it probable that the seeing eye, any power, that is, which can see this universe, looks over one great ocean of life, a boundless all-pervading sea in which matter is a mere floating vehicle for the play and activity of life to work on?

It is easy to imagine a state of things which shall illustrate this by analogy. Light is the

subtlest essence we know in the material world. Light pervades the universe; ocean beyond ocean of light stretches through the abysses of space; as far as we know, light through all infinity is undulating its everlasting waves. Compared with light the vastest world is but a speck, the rolling orbs of matter that stud the heavens unappreciable dots, set there to give out or reflect its glory. Now let us suppose that man could only see light when reflected from some solid body. All the aerial splendour would be quenched; but the earth and every thing on earth—each flower, leaf and stone would become a light, and seem to be an independent fire; each blade of grass would be a living ray; all that flies or moves, all things animate, all things inanimate, would be present to his eye as light-powers; all would bring light to him; he would know light only from them. But although unseen by him, and incapable of being reached by his eye—light, as now, would surround him on every side, and he would be moving amidst the boundless waves of the infinity of the ocean of light, knowing nothing of it, only because his eye was too coarse to see light in

the fine medium of air. Then philosophers would arise, they would examine carefully the earth-lights, and all the seeming luminous bodies on earth; they would trace no direct connexion between them and the orbs on high, which would hang high up to their eyes in a black lightless gulf without rays, without visible communion with the lights on earth, apparently cut off from them; (to be sure there would be shadows cast, but this presents no difficulty to an impartial mind which appreciates the vivid imagination of modern philosophy, with its "tendencies" and its power of dogmatising on life by a process of clear inductive reasoning based on researches in death). Well, philosophers would arise, they would frame theories (here I cannot follow them, but may hint at a philosophic cult of the diamond), and they would deny the statement handed down with marvellous attestation of its truth, that all the light on earth came from those orbs; though all the while they themselves were moving without escape in the midst of the great ocean of unseen light, encompassed by our air and its splendour, but unable to see its subtle waves. Substitute

the word "life" for "light" in this comparison and the analogy is complete. Reason tells us plainly that a being endowed with material organs only as his means of communicating with the outer world and receiving communications from it, can by no possibility discern the immaterial excepting through matter, and reflected as it were by it. Is it not enough that we can discern matter without life, that we can discern the same matter unchanged as matter, but utterly different without life from what it was a moment before with life? and that we can discern life producing results utterly different in kind and degree from any material agency? If spirits ever laugh, they must laugh to see man with his material instruments trying to catch the immaterial, hacking at the world-carcase like a butcher at an ox, to find out life; making post mortem examinations with solemn earnestness in search of —life, and when he cannot find it, saying it is not, mistaking dissection for construction, groping in dead tissue, and proclaiming himself a creator because he has discovered how to pull to pieces skilfully. Is this surgical knowledge, supposing

we grant it coextensive with matter, instead of the knowledge of a few collections of atoms which it is, worth anything whatever in the presence of the illimitable ocean of life, which no instrument can dissect or cut? of which our ignorance is simply measureless, excepting so far as we are able and willing to understand truth revealed by God? And this measureless ignorance is the power which we are to fall down and worship as commensurate with the mind of God. If not, what is meant by man telling us that "universal laws are never changed or suspended"? It is not conceivable that any observation of the facts of a matter-world can furnish any basis of theory even as to the working of a spirit-world. Still less is it conceivable that any observation of facts is a measure of God. Let philosophy be bold, and if its claims are true, fall down and worship that power, whether man or cell or force, which philosophers have discovered as their theoretical First Cause. But minds not yet worked by philosophy into this sublime enthusiasm and disregard of reason, minds which study life as seen in man and explained by revelation, cannot as

yet be so enlightened as to think that the noblest progress of life in the noblest form of life we know, namely man, first, is not life at all, but a force; and secondly, whatever it is, that the progress has been brought about by means of a mixture of truth and lies purporting to come from God, and called His Word; or by philosophy, the talk of a few ingenious minds and limited to them: and that this curious discovery about life is made by investigating non-living matter. As well go to a butcher for information about natural life as to science for information about spirit life. As well mistake the study of a mask by a child for the knowledge of the man's face behind it, which is moving to and fro at will with a strength that no effort can possibly force to give up its secret Whatever may be said, as long as reason is reason, we know that intelligence is not matter, or life death; and as the body without the life is dead, so is matter and the material world. A fly is more and higher, immeasurably more and immeasurably higher, if we know anything at all, than the sun itself, if (which the spectroscope can tell us nothing about) the sun is only a material

orb. And unassisted reason is incapable of doing more than observing a few facts on this narrow earth in the only subject that can really be called knowledge or truth, namely the subject of Life.

VII.

If philosophers were born in full possession of all the knowledge already gathered by their predecessors, instead of having to spend years of their short life in acquiring it before they can add a line, yet the fact of being chained to this earth, one amongst innumerable worlds, wonderfully curtails their power of investigating matter, whilst their corporeal frame is an utter bar to any true analysis of life; and beyond this earth, science knows nothing of life at all. These are, as we said, serious limitations, nay more than limitations, utter unconquerable inability to proceed, on the very threshold. Even as regards matter, what would man on the surface of the moon know of this earth with the best telescope that ever was made and all our experience? What would he know of the varied products, and their beauty, as they exist, from having discovered the chemical composition of the earth-crust? What

would he know of water, a new element, of vegetation the child of water, of snows, of seas, of rivers, in fact of anything whatever which is really characteristic of our earth, and makes it the fair habitation it is, with its beauty and its life? Now reverse the position, what do we know of any other orb besides our own?

Reason, if it exists, ought to mark out for us pretty clearly our ignorance of God's works, and of all creation, even of created matter viewed from the side of the Creator's power and wisdom and the knowledge conceivable in beings higher and with greater means of judging than ourselves. Mere change of place, the ability to move at will from star to star, would doubtless enlarge our knowledge in the same way, only infinitely more, than travelling from country to country does upon this earth. Is the difference between different worlds to be deemed less than the difference between the North Pole and the Tropics, that we Esquimaux in our sealskin canoes should so confidently lay down the law about other worlds from seeing a bit of floating timber cast on our shores? Why should there not be unknown ele-

ments to us, as we know there are to any being with knowledge limited as ours is, who lives in the moon? How does light reach us with its undulations through the abysses without air? In another world why may there not be a fire vegetation, just as we have here on earth a water vegetation? I am obliged to take a known element to deal with, as the products of unknown elements obviously cannot be imagined. Why may not the moon, for instance, with its volcanoes be one great garden full of fire-fed plants, and what we are pleased to call its barren rocks be perpetual fountains of resplendent fire-life? This may well be the case with the material products of other worlds, of which we know absolutely nothing, and never can know anything. But our reason would warn us, from what we do know, against closing our minds over a few facts, and ticketing the closed mind "Omniscience." I have said nothing of the angel-life above us in unknown natures and unknown worlds, for the excellent reason that we know nothing about it. Yet our intellect would tell us distinctly, as soon as we study the ranges of life, that there is this

continuous rise in living intelligences: a fact which revelation declares to us as a fact. But as soon as we leave life allied to visible matter we are clearly quite unable to form any idea of its working. We can see, however, our ignorance of the gradations of life, and we can see the distinction between a Creator calling life into existence, and a maker combining the material given him by a Creator and making a fresh result by doing so. Let us assume that a great deal of the life we see on earth is merely subtle matter, electricity for instance, acting on other matter. If this is so, it is quite conceivable that as we mount upwards in the scale of Creation, we might arrive at beings—angels or archangels let us call them—with a knowledge and a power able to make any fresh combinations whatever of the created matter, and any number of fresh creatures endowed with this kind of life. It is conceivable that man might arrive at a beginning of such power. Be it so. How much nearer have these makers got to bridging over the awful gulf between themselves and the Creator who gave them their lives, their powers, and the materials to work on? How much nearer

have they got to knowing anything about real life—life divine—which we know to exist, or the gradations or kinds of life which there may be? Or, to come nearer home, what real result would there be if man arrived at a distinct analytical knowledge of the life-germ of an amœba, or was able to make such a combination? What would he prove? What discovery would he really have made about life? What would he know of life-classification? As the answer to these questions must inevitably be "nothing," we may proceed to observe that the knowledge and power which can never entirely extract even this elementary secret must be put down as -0, unless we are to bow down and admit that a channel must run with the same contents, and because water turns mills deny the existence of wine. Minus nothing then is the result reason shews us as the attainment of philosophy in investigating life, its origin, and its kinds. Now let us turn and see whether reason tells us anything of the sort of knowledge possible in what we do find here on earth in our own life and its workings; whether we get any clue from a comparison of facts as to

what man was intended to do during his short stay here, and how his powers and being were to be brought to perfection; or whether we are only created to be the laughing-stock of angels who know; to be the jesters of the world to Beings able to see what we are guessing at when we guess.

We boast of our reason. Be it so.

1. Reason requires us to admit that means must be proportioned to the end proposed.

2. Reason requires us to admit that a world where this does not hold good is an irrational world. And an irrational world is mean if the work of man, impossible as the work of God.

3. Reason shows us that mankind are so deficient in reason as with rare exceptions to be incapable of balancing subtle arguments, or even understanding them: and moreover that the laws which govern man's natural life, and the conditions for its maintenance, are conclusive against mankind ever attaining in large numbers to any philosophic power in the exercise of reason.

4. Reason therefore shows us that if reason is the greatest moving power on earth, and the

instrument by which man is to be raised, this is an irrational world.

5. Reason therefore shows us that there must be some higher power on earth, or that this world is a mean world if made by man, and most certainly has not been thus made by God.

6. Reason shows us that this power if it exists must reside in every individual of mankind in much the same degree, at least in power sufficient to be a paramount motive power, and must not require time and learning to acquire.

7. Reason shows us there is such a power in the feelings.

Reason and experience teach us that Love and Hate do move all ages, ranks, and races for practical purposes equally.

Reason tells us they often do this in opposition to, or in spite of, reason.

God tells us that this is the power by purifying and giving life to which He moves the world of men.

God tells us that He has created man to love truth, as He has created the eye to receive light.

God appeals to the heart, and this removes

all vital questions from the horizon space of human philosophy, where both the defenders and impugners of religion appeal to the head, as if living in a world which their own arbiter reason declares would be an irrational world.

Here once more we are met at the very threshold by the same truth concerning the intellect and the limitation it imposes, from a different quarter. Knowledge-power first of all is almost *nil* as reason declares, not the deity which power-worshippers would have it to be; and secondly, reason declares that knowledge-power is not the ruling power on earth, not the end man is set on earth to work towards. The first discovery of reason is the petty nature of such power, the second that there is something else higher and better, common to the whole race. For what is power by itself? a great instrument. A blind man firing incessantly into a crowd, it may be of his dearest, is a faint image of power in bad hands, acting in this complicated world. A faint image, for the death and injury there is but temporary, but knowledge-power wrongly used goes on for centuries dealing out death.

To live for knowledge only, if it were possible, would be to be a devil, since knowledge without love of good, taken for its own sake would clearly involve this conclusion. And it is possible to know truth without loving it. Yet not to care for knowledge as far as true life permits, would be to cease to be a man. The relative proportion is everything. Let us not forget this: knowledge is not despised by those who put it in its right place. Now reason, as we have seen above, distinctly shows us that intellectual power and the progress of knowledge is not the end proposed to man during his stay on earth. Knowledge is a conquest, the possession of which *per se* neither makes him better nor worse, only stronger. Strength joined with beneficent will and directed by it is good, but strength used evilly is evil—a curse to its possessor in proportion to its greatness. And the worship of strength apart from love and good, if the intellect rules, is devilish, if the flesh rules, animal. Let us however see what we mean by knowledge-power.

It would not be difficult to imagine a world peopled by human beings from whose minds all

calculating intellectual force should be excluded, whose reason should stop short of all conquering acquisitive power, who should in consequence be quite incapable of making any advance in science or art which required combination to produce a fresh result, who should, as far as intellect goes, only see things as they are, without any power of search to render them capable of theorising and discovering; to whom a flower would remain a flower always, with no botanical knowledge beyond its visible characteristics, a butterfly in like manner bring no fresh knowledge, and so on throughout. What would be left such a race? It is possible to conceive such a race endowed so richly in feeling, and imagination, which is only feeling vivified, so full of life and life-power as to have a boundless world of enjoyment even in the smallest circle, from the intense power of seeing and feeling things as they are. Such a being might be endowed with a delicacy of perception that should be able to spend a delighted life in viewing a fly's wing, or a blade of grass, so wondrously and so subtlely should the feelings take the impression given them. Then in their social life all holiness, purity,

love, honesty, truth of heart, might make society beautiful and happy even though society stayed fixed for ever at the point of external skill that Adam and Eve represented when they were naked but not ashamed.

In other words, exclude the conquering intellect-power from the world, the mere knowing-power with its material gains, and man with right feelings is a glorious and happy being still. Give the conquering intellect-power and give also feelings capable of good and evil, and man, in spite of feelings that can love good, is—what he is. It may be retorted, Then according to this view an amiable idiot is better than a Bacon. One of the great difficulties that beset all questions of this kind is the one difficulty mentioned before, the impossibility whilst urging one part of keeping the relative proportion it bears to other parts before an unwilling eye. This argument deals with the compound being man, and the question between the idiot and Bacon is not raised at all: the question raised is, Given the existence of intellect and feelings, which of the two is the higher power? not, What is the value of the minimum

quantity of either as weighed against a maximum of the other? This we know little about. All are agreed that the perfection of all the powers makes a perfect man. But because we admire a strong arm, we do not want a man to be all arms, a Gorilla; or because we admire strong legs, we do not want a man to be all legs, a Kangaroo; or to be all intellect either, if it destroys higher powers. Hence it is of infinite importance to know the right value of our powers. A man who lives for the body only is an animal. But a man who lives for the intellect is only a more powerful animal, since no addition of strength, whether that strength is intellectual or physical, makes the owner a different being from what he was before. A stronger horse remains a horse still. So also man, by strength of intellect, is only made stronger, and so far as this alone reaches, a stronger animal. The full perfection of manhood depends on the right balance of powers. The body cannot reach its fullest muscular strength if the intellect is to reach its fullest development of strength, and a prize-fighter's strength of limb cannot coexist with philosophic strength of head. A choice has

to be made, and the less worthy to be sacrificed somewhat to the welfare of the more worthy. This is the case also with the feelings and intellect, only the facts are less obvious. The full development of the one cannot coexist with the full development of the other. One must give way, and the perfect man will be that man who has sacrificed the less worthy in right proportions to the more worthy: the more so as power is represented by the intellect and its conquests. The power, that is, which makes its possessor strong over the material world and his fellow-men, as far as the material world sways them; and the material world, represented by riches, armies, and in a word all forces, does sway men very largely. Power-worship puts in strong claims for man. But here we are met by the great facts of the world's construction. That cannot be true power which makes a few men great in each generation, and leaves millions upon millions degraded, or in many instances makes them so. The problem before every man in earnest, who does not sit in his study and make worlds, obviously is, How shall the millions of mankind, who however en-

dowed have no time and never will have time to be intellectual, be made happy and good? What has been done as yet? As far as knowledge reaches them, it reaches them in the shape of results—railways, manufactures, clothes, and all articles made by scientific discoveries. No doubt these discoveries enable a great many more men to live in a given area; but as yet every one will agree there is elbow room on the earth. Have these discoveries *taken alone* done more than this even where they have reached? And how very few millions of the human race they have reached. Is there any intrinsic virtue in a better pair of trousers, or a railway, to make the wearer or traveller better? No one denies that increased instrumental power rightly used is a gain, but to worship instrumental power is no gain. Or if we turn to literature, the claim is still more transparently false. Philosophers write as if they ruled the world. What are the facts? There happens to be one book that as literature enjoys a strange pre-eminence, and really has burst down many of the barriers that stand in the way of extended power. Shakespear is that book. But

out of the nine hundred millions of the human race, who are supposed to be on the earth at this present moment, how many have read Shakespear? How many have heard of him even? After fairly considering these two questions, the third need scarcely be asked, How many have in any degree got real good from him? Yet Shakespear is a glorious possession. And a great literature without doubt is a necessity in any educated, living nation; the absence of a great literature a sign of the absence of life, since civilized man cannot help, as being man, exercising his mind, and putting out what he feels and what he thinks. Nevertheless the very small circle that enjoy literature or study philosophy is as a fact conclusive against the sovereignty claims of literature and philosophy. If it be said, "Few read philosophy, but those few are the great men of all time," then we come back at once to our starting point, that it is a very mean world we live in, if all its goodness is to be concentrated in an infinitesimal minority. And the question rises, Supposing those few and all they ever said or did removed from the earth, would the earth be really worse off as regards

mankind in general, provided moral and spiritual development went on? In other words, Have literature and philosophy done anything whatever for the moral welfare of the world excepting so far as they have been servants of religion, and given up any claim of their own. When they have been merely powers separated from religion, either by being in heathen lands, or by choosing to cast off their allegiance to religion in lands where the light of religion shone, they have done nothing for the *masses*. Nay, have they professed to do anything for the unintellectual? Is it not possible that these powers which the few enjoy, and the worship of these powers by the ignorant, may be the great barrier in the way of the humble, loving, feeling-work which benefits the many? Can knowledge which demands the undivided attention of clever brains over many years, and concentrates their habits on self, and demands that they shall not be at the beck and call of any other man or work, can this exclusive, monastic withdrawal from the work and interests of common humanity, be the lever which is to reach and raise all common humanity to its level? Why, common

humanity has nothing to do with it or it with them, excepting so far as these monks of learning condescendingly fling out some scraps, the broken victuals and kitchen stuff of their hospices to the wayfarers. If power-worshippers make intellect the great agent, and exalt it as an end, and forget its completely instrumental character, they do with the mind what the worship of the thumb would do with the body. The thumb is man's distinctive power-instrument in the body; but thumb-worship, whether it be the bodily or mental thumb, can scarcely be the true help for mankind. Thumb-worship is fatal to progress as stopping human effort at a low point, and confining attention to an unworthy and narrow range. So long as the intellect with its pitiful incapacity, its inflated self-assertion, and its material conquests successfully claims the allegiance of mankind, so long the baseness of the master makes the servant baser still, and Trinculo gives Caliban wine, and Caliban thinks him a god, and Trinculo likes to be thought a god, having tasted the same wine himself.

There is no hope of real advancement in such

a state of things; rebellion against the true master is a necessary consequence; he must be got rid of, or Trinculo and Caliban cannot rule. But men must lay aside this false power and go down amongst their fellow-men, rich in help and strength, with a just view of the work that has to be done, and of the means at their disposal for doing it; means which attract heart to heart, the humblest to the highest, instead of repelling the ignorant and weak by the cold impossibility of communion through the head, or worse still, making tools of them, pouring out to the brute strength of mobs intoxicating doubts and fumes of self-exaltation. It is a sorry spectacle the Trinculos and Calibans conspiring together against the true lord of the island. The end of life should be steadily put before the mind, and the great fact that reason lays down this most decisive law, that knowledge and intellectual conquests do not form the true end of life, or man's real greatness.

Nothing that is here said is any disparagement to the intellect. It is no reproach to the body of man to be less than his intellect, neither is it a reproach to the intellect to be less than the feel-

ings and right love. All have their place, all find their greatest ultimate good by being kept in place. But it is a reproach to a man that he sets his animal life above his intellectual life, it is also a reproach to a man that he sets his intellectual life above his feelings. But intellectual culture is good; intellectual culture is the allotted work of many. All are not cut out to one pattern. In this training-world of imperfect natures and conflicting views, and above all, of growth which implies advance from lower to higher, many occupations are wanted, spheres manifold, interest as diversified as the characters of men to be dealt with, be they good or evil. And that is a true theory of life which gives to each man his own fitting work, the work qualified to raise him, and which he can do, instead of drawing a perfect circle of admirable excellence, and requiring the poor imperfect anatomy inside, all corners and angles, to pretend to fill it; when in reality he is but a speck in the midst of it, and if he must make a show, is compelled to keep running round the outer edge, and leave all the inner heart-core and truth of it empty. Much of the life of those who are

above the reach of want is intended to be cheered and employed in the ennobling use of intellectual faculties, and the joys of fresh discovery. The right use of the intellect is ennobling. And, as the world is constituted, the only hope of bringing many out of low sensual temptations lies in giving mental occupation and unsensual delights; to make stepping-stones for them out of the slough, even if they cannot be persuaded to go up to the mount of God. No power of man's nature is given him to destroy: none is given him to neglect. There is perfect order intended in the formation of man, the highest being on earth; and the wonderful secrets of goodness and wisdom which modern science has unveiled must be acknowledged with gratitude and praise by every one who loves mankind. But more than this, the duties, the practice ground, the exercise sphere of the true Christian life lies with many in the right cultivation of intellectual powers, and a right search after knowledge. This, as everything else on this earth, becomes in such cases the material by which the true heart is proved and tested. Whatever may be in the abstract the highest life,

and there is no doubt that the life of the Redeemer working amongst men whom He came to save is the highest type, whatever may be in the abstract the highest, is beside the question. The highest to each man is to work the work set him to work nobly and well; whether the work is intellectual or practical. The true heart deals truly with the life put before it to be dealt with. The eye does not scorn the hand or the hand the eye; and neither of them can afford to reject the true feeling that guides both. When the Psalmist tells us that "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handy work," he also tells us that every fresh wonder of the heaven and the firmament, as it becomes known, swells the song of praise. How thrilling has been the message brought by men of science from the double star 61 Cygni, and all the mysteries of inconceivable distance; how the mind swoons with curious awe as it toils to realise what (strange wonder) it can so easily represent, the space that seems wearisome even for light to travel across. What interest has been added to the heavens, what interest to the earth, as each has unfolded

to the patient search of man its wondrous secrets. That which thrills the hearer to hear of, must exercise unspeakable power with the finder who tracks in a perpetual expectancy of hope the clues which God has given. It is God's revelation in matter; His glory speaking to the eye; not less truly His, though a more elementary lesson to us, than the revelation of His Love and Goodness in His direct dealings with man. To read this revelation is, or may be, most thorough service for Him. Lord Rosse's telescope and Lionel Beale's microscope are gains to the human race, noble instruments in noble hands. Wherever unselfish work can be done (and where can it not?) there Christ is glorified, and heavenly truth in its purest sense worked out. It matters little what work we work, if it is our lot to do it and we do it with the right heart. The Magi of old had their star bringing them to the Infant Saviour, as surely in the end as the plainer voices and the more clear sight of angels did the Shepherds. Intellectual knowledge rightly applied led them. Rich and learned, devoting their lives to science and to watching the stars they were

not checked by their riches, or their learning, or the calm of their quiet intellectual life in the pursuit of Truth, or shocked at finding what they sought in the humblest form. Their gifts brought from a far land, their gifts of allegiance were laid at the feet of a very little child in a cottage home. A great practical test of the heart-feeling which from the heights of earthly knowledge could worship the lowly glory of a throne set up amongst the poor. As hard, methinks, for learned philosophers to see their King in a cottage cradle, as for the dying robber-soldier to see his King in Him who hung by him on the Cross. But it was done. The shepherds in their simpler life received a simpler, clearer message. Yet who can say that to connect the star with the Saviour child was less clear to the wise men? The Shepherds and the Wise Men each received a message suited to each, and neither had any true ground for questioning the lot of the other, for both met in the result, both were led to Christ; great types of those in all ages whom knowledge leads to feel truth and love it, and those whom feeling leads to see truth and love it. The wise men who worship the

Infant Saviour, and pay no heed to Herod and his kingly power, have cast aside the pride of knowledge and the worship of power, and have not stopped short at the new star and the delight of recording it, or, worse still, have not made the discovery of the new star a means of gaining popular favour and advancing themselves by a time-serving betrayal of the secret given them to know, and used their knowledge to glorify Herod and destroy Truth. Power was not their god; nor will it be the god of anyone who looks at the facts of the world, and hears what reason has to tell him of the things which man can do, and what is still more important, of the things man was obviously intended to do as a tenant of a world which reason shows us to be great and glorious, and neither irrational nor mean.

VIII.

THE idea of intellectual and reasoning power as the agent of progress, in the true sense of progress, must now be dismissed as unworthy of serious consideration from intelligent reasoners. The laws of the world, (philosophy is fond of laws,) render it absolutely impossible that knowledge by itself should do much for the mass of mankind; whilst the nature of the subjects to which human knowledge must necessarily be confined, and their material character in the main puts them at once in a position of measureless inferiority to man, and entirely deprives them of any title to the great name of Truth. These facts remove all difficulties arising from the inequality of the intellects, and opportunities of acquiring knowledge, seen in the world. There is no reason why power should be equally distributed, whether it is the power of wealth, or the power of limb, or the power of intellect. All are mere instru-

ments, and as such may be given in greater or less degree, without in any respect affecting the real excellence of the holder. But even when this unequal distribution of knowledge has been set at its right value, the facts of the world still present great difficulties. We see in the world of feeling, in the loving and hating realm, many strange contrasts, such opposite circumstances, and in many instances such seeming hopelessness of breaking loose from the bondage of place and influence.

Part of this difficulty however is only apparent, and disappears as soon as it is examined. This earth is a training ground of feeling. However untoward circumstances may appear, they can, and do test every living heart, as to what each chooses or rejects. They do prove whether love of good is the ruling power or not. Every one possesses feelings, every one is tried by circumstances, the meanest savage as well as the lordliest philosopher has presented to him circumstances calculated to call forth, nay which must call forth, love and hate. What each knows only comes into the question as making the choice more intelligent, or less intelligent, more or

less deliberate. The choice is being made throughout all life. And it is quite conceivable that God, who is Love, may tenderly foster under the strangest shapes the spark of love in man debased and ignorant, and may hereafter put it in a favourable sphere. His eye may detect the spark under any amount of savagery. His eye may see the want of it under any amount of glittering ice-knowledge which reflects light in its outward beauty, from a nature in deadly and cold antagonism to its warmth and life. Thus as an actual fact every man is tested; and the wonderful variety of circumstances, however puzzling, does not prevent this great main process going on in every instance of all the millions upon earth. This however only accounts for the inequality. It is no solution whatever of the much greater difficulty of the constant ebb as well as flow of life and progress; no solution of the difficulty of the parallel tides of heathen intellectual development and glory with its doom, and the little rill of divine teaching in early days, and in later days, of the parallel tides of knowledge-worship and of Christianity. Why there should be such a

perpetual falling back from truth again and again, is in no way explained by what has been said above.

On any conceivable theory of development as such, any theory which starts on the assumption of man being gradually brought forward from some initial life-germ, the ebb is perfectly inexplicable. How is it possible that a creature, whose innate power has brought itself to the present state of complex excellence from a cell-state, step by step, should be perpetually failing in its experiments after so much experience, perpetually falling back and perishing out of its later perfection, after having overcome the stupendous difficulties of emerging from a beginning so weak? This is to suppose that the lobster without a shell is a stronger creature than the lobster with a shell. It is certain that any theory of gradual development, in a nature capable of having such a theory formed of it, must proceed on the basis of continuous advance however slow, and not be subject to a perpetual loss of gains already acquired; for this soon brings matters to a standstill; development cannot be development if it is

constantly losing ground, constantly being overthrown by its own success; a time must come at last when the experiment would end in an utter using up of all the material capable of being used. For a perpetual series of new trials without a new principle to set them going is an absurdity. It is a still greater absurdity that the innate force which has overcome the difference between a cell and a monkey, and a monkey and a man, and made itself a man through all these arduous changes, should be so at fault in the little gradations of man-life, and perish through weakness and ignorance in the petty items of a nature triumphantly attained, after having, when weaker and more ignorant still, passed out of nature after nature, and overcome not only the difficulties of each, but the gulf between each. The same reasoning holds good if we discard the cell-theory of development. How can man created capable of development, with a nature adapted to progress, so constantly over all the known history of past years, let go the gains he has got, if they are gains. To put it in a concrete form, How can Persia be conquered and destroyed by Greece, Greece by Rome,

Rome by the barbarians? This is a strange ladder of development. Is there any instance on record of a nation being overthrown and enslaved which was not already rotten within? But rotten empires are a strange development. This perpetual falling back is not explained even by the fact of all mankind being tested and tried as to their allegiance to Love or to knowledge. The manner in which the work is carried on in the human race as a whole remains a very startling and inexplicable mystery, a mystery incapable perhaps of being unravelled by man's unassisted reason. All however is made plain as soon as we receive God's revelation that the earth is peopled by a fallen race, who have to unlearn before they can learn, who are incapable of true learning excepting so far as they unlearn the pride of knowledge and the worship of self-engendered knowledge-power, who could not love truth till they ceased to love falsehood, who could not love unselfish good till they ceased to love selfish power.

Here we see the origin of the two parallel processes and of the ebb and flow. Man is always unlearning as well as learning. Man is not en-

dowed with a nature naturally progressive and perfectible from its own inherent life: man is endowed with a nature at variance with itself, containing both life and death, or rather tainted by death, but capable of casting out death and receiving and cherishing life when given it. The natural development is to death, as we see in the human body, and as we see in the human empires. But Life comes with its offers of help, which can be accepted or rejected. Hence the ebb and flow, as the two rival powers life or death prevail. This revelation makes it clear that the two developments will always be going on. This revelation makes it clear that all the early world history must be in the main a history of unlearning, of undoing the death-power, and that, if Life is to be Lord, a great epoch must take place at last, at which, theoretically, for general purposes of the whole race of mankind, this unlearning process shall be complete. This shows us that before this epoch the death development shall be dominant, that great powers will rise and their very rise and success shall be death. This shows us that knowledge-worship, and human devices, and human

pride and power will characterise those first times, combined with a constantly increasing degradation of the human race: this shows us that after this epoch, the divine plan and the learning and the progressive life-spirit will begin to prevail, and to gather more and more of outward significance as well as inward strength. In a word, this divides the world history into two periods, and explains the seeming confusion. The first period is characterised by unlearning; unlearning the pride of self, discovering that its victory is ruin, unlearning belief in man's own nature, discovering that its development is ruin; unlearning the trust in a seeming sovereignty, discovering that to win it is death. The second characterised by learning; learning to distrust self, to trust God, and to find life by doing so. These two processes are for ever going on. The ebb and flow, and parallel efforts are inevitable. There can be no smooth unbroken advance. We believe, for God has told us so, that Life shall conquer, but we have no authority for believing that Life shall conquer in any particular instance, any particular generation, at any particular time. All alike cannot proceed equably.

There must be constant trials: that is the meaning of a Fall and a Restoration. When man rebelled at the beginning, and broke off his union with the God of Love, he chose a rival power, and had of necessity to find out the kind of choice he had made, before he could make a true choice again. This was a necessity; for the revolt was a revolt from Love. What else could be done, assuming such a revolt? Could power inspire the lost love, and regain it? Man had just revolted against power. Could force? Does force in any form or under any circumstances inspire love? Could knowledge and teaching? The devil-knowledge and its glory neither cared for it nor would obey it. *This was the Fall.* Man had chosen a king who promised him knowledge and sovereignty, and rejected the King whose love he felt and knew in all things, to whom he owed everything happy and good about him as well as life itself. God permitted man to have the promised rule though the devil promised it. Man became the highest visible power upon earth, invested with a sovereignty "as of Gods, knowing good and evil," having learnt to hate as well as

love. But it was the sovereignty of a rebel, cut off from the Highest, cut off from Life. And man had to learn this.

It may be that not only man was taught by this, but that, until man fell, the real nature of life was unknown to any being, excepting God Himself. It may be that no spirit, however great or glorious, save God, before the fall of man had been able to separate God's power from God's love, and to see how much higher love was than power, to see that knowledge-power—for that is the highest power which is mere power—was not identical with life, and that want of power was not the cause of the inferiority of evil. It is quite conceivable that in a world of Spirits, a world whose nature was such that evil could not display itself in any way which should corrupt, destroy, or bring to an end the subtle intelligences that dwelt there, evil might be incapable of showing its deadly nature, and the overthrow of evil might seem an act of arbitrary strength, and the reasons for its overthrow, if known, be received as simple faith and allegiance by angels and archangels who continued to be good, and knew not

in their own nature the slightest taint of evil, and could frame therefore no conception, however great their glory or their knowledge, of what evil was. But all this was altered as soon as they saw in man on earth the strange union of good and evil, love and knowledge, joined in a corruptible body, though not in harmony, and then perceived each working its will on matter that it could and did mould, whilst as one or other prevailed life or death followed as an inevitable consequence by what we should call a law of nature. Then appeared perhaps a new truth; then first was known the essential victory and life inherent in love, and the essential corruption, decay, and death inherent in any power, knowledge, or force, apart from love. Hence the earth, small as it is, became a Θέατρον to angels, a place on which they could learn wondrous novelties of the nature of goodness and of God unknown in the Highest Heavens before; a place on which the Son of God could become incarnate, and by His Incarnation display to wondering and attentive worlds mysteries of Love and divine nature which had been impossible

before in the perfect courts of the Almighty kingdom. It may be that new light not only of Love, but of mysterious knowledge, is being hourly shed amongst all the glorious beings that worship God by this revelation of His own nature and of the nature of evil. And angels desire to look into these things, as great and wonderful teaching for themselves, as well as from their delight in seeing the goodness of God working. Thus the struggle carried on on earth, the awful and seemingly disproportionate consequences of sin, acquire new significance. The misery, the tears, the pain, all the long agony of mind and body that the long years harvest so incessantly, are no useless offering, no tearing needlessly poor victims who are beneath such consideration; but this earth is the scene, and we men the agents by which all created beings that know and feel, learn what God is, and with whom all created beings that know and feel, take ceaseless part with never-dying interest and love. But be this as it may. When this strange pushing of man's nature out of proportion, this inversion of the balance of love and knowledge took place in his being, by

which knowledge, intellect, and power became his cherished idol, the first thing was to let man discover the value of his rebel-throne, find out his need, and unlearn his self-confidence. It follows from this at once, that God would give him the means of returning to Himself, and that first one, and then another, would deviate from these. Then year by year fresh complications of facts and circumstances producing further ignorance, and various self-supplied idolatries as substitutes for truth or at first as deflections from it, would go on as they did go on, without apparently any great interference from God. And man, we are told, rose to a wonderful excellence of invention and artistic range and power, in his new sovereignty, and sank to a wondrous depth of degradation as a social being, until God brought this first epoch of comparative letting things alone to a close, by destroying the whole race excepting eight persons. So ended the first great experiment of man to rest on his own power, and construct a power-kingdom—his first great lesson in unlearning. There is no development from a basis of power towards life, and increased good,

and perfection. We know nothing further of this first epoch, probably because God gave no help whatever, after the expulsion from Paradise, that in any way altered or renewed the original state; so all is summed up in the few pages which tell us of the wonderful intellect, inventive genius, power, and grandeur of the first race of men and —their utter corruption and destruction. The second epoch we are told opened with the knowledge of a fatal past, with a fresh promise and revelation for the future. Still it was an absolute certainty that as impressions faded by time, and the power-worship and false-sovereignty principle acquired strength in proportion, the old process of revolt would go on; and it would be necessary for the true King to proclaim Himself afresh to those who were willing to receive Him. The natural development of fallen man is rebellion and self-worship; the counterpoise to this was a continual renewal of divine help measured out in exact accordance with the state of man, neither more nor less, inasmuch as any premature presenting of love-power was useless, and therefore to God impossible, until the bitter experience,

the unlearning process was completed, and the fulness of time come for imparting a renewed nature, instead of merely meeting occasional needs. These steps we know more about. As man again became corrupt, God chose out a family to exemplify how far family-life was capable of being made the instrument for restoring mankind. But before this took place, it was necessary that the society bond of mankind should have utterly broken down, and proved insufficient. It was necessary, in other words, that man working in his own strength should have practically revolted from God again, and once more forgotten Him. This brought about the necessity of a new message, and a new message, the necessity of new proof, and new proof is what man is pleased to call a miracle, that is, a miraculum to him, as transcending any known power; not a *miraculum*, as we have shown, in any absolute sense, for *omne majus continet in se minus*, and there is nothing wonderful in God, who creates, and upholds, changing, in order to declare Himself to His human subjects, any part of the world-frame.

First then miracles took place to individuals

and families in an isolated and apparently desultory way, in order to help them in the effort to make family-life do its work as a great bond. But when bitter experience had proved that family life could not hold society together, or make social life endurable, then a new revelation with fresh miraculous attestation, as was reasonable, took place to a nation; and parallel with this ran on the great human intellectual experiments, by which Egypt and Assyria by bulk, Greece by intellect, discarding all idea of bulk, Rome by a combination of both the previous ideas, with law superadded, endeavoured to weld mankind into great organizations, which should live and progress and embody the power-sovereignty of man. But all failed. Whilst they were trying and failing, the Jewish kingdom was carrying on the experiment under God. The possession of the promised land was a kind of renewal of the basis of Paradise, by which the Jews, as Adam before them, knew that whatever might be the case with others, they at all events had everything—home, country, happiness—as a direct gift from God. This more settled government of God on earth, in proportion

to its perfection, required His direct interference less, and so comparatively few miracles were worked during the period of the Jewish national life, as the ordinary network of divine law and divine order was sufficient to carry on the experiment. But the corruption of the Jewish nation, in spite of their knowledge and their self-interest, proved once more that fallen man wanted something more than knowledge, something more even than divine teaching, to restore the lost life. For "if there had been a law given," says St Paul, "which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law," and so by parity of reasoning, the Gospel, as far as it is only teaching, does not give back the lost life. When it had been seen in this way that not knowledge, not teaching, but life and living power and union with God by nature, was the great need, and when the heathen world had proved the same thing by its varied failures, then the fulness of time had come.

The Jews had shown that even divine teaching and knowledge direct from God was too weak for the task. The intellectual supremacy of Greece, and the fierce legal organizing power of Rome, had

equally broken down, and made it plain that intellect and strength are but more elaborate curses in proportion to their perfection. Mankind had been shown for ever their inability of themselves to win back the lost life, or to do without it. Then the message of God and new powers with it were brought down to earth by the Son of God; a greater kingdom than Canaan was established, with more perfect channels of order and government. Then, as was certain to be the case, miracles were worked to attest the new message, and when the message was attested, were merged in a perfect organization of daily power. So eighteen hundred years of light and blessing, fresh progress year by year, and life subduing sin and death by means of grace, and constant help divine, have taken their place, and pass on in even flow the Love of God for man. This is development. Let those who object because they do not understand, reflect that not to understand only means want of knowledge, unless there is the suppressed assumption behind, that the statement under consideration is false. Let them consider that the history of the world has to be reconstructed if the Scriptures are not

true. So now once more a third Paradise, as far as evidence goes, has been constructed on a greater scale, and the Christian finds himself placed in it, surrounded with blessings which centuries of history prove to have come direct from God, as he needs must know unless he chooses not to know. The lost life has been given back, higher powers, a nobler nature capable of a nobler development for good ; and day by day this restoration goes on, and needs no further confirmation or extension on the part of God. The one only true miracle, as being the one only exercise of God's power and love that deals with spirit-life, the incarnation of the Son of God, completes and at the same time renews everything evermore. Not again shall any new revelation be made on earth, not again shall man proclaim God to man on a new basis, neither in the desert of the world and its wisdom, nor in the secret chambers of eclectic holiness shall Christ be found. When He next comes every eye shall see Him at once; none shall have time to tell his neighbour; "as the lightning shines from the East unto the West, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be," instan-

taneous, complete, universal. The kingdom of God is here now, organized as far as it ever will be for the earthly society. And this state of things is precisely what reason tells us we do see as a fact upon earth, at the same time reason tells us we cannot account for the fact in any other way. It is evident that all human wisdom must stand or fall by its results amongst mankind; every system, however good it may appear on paper, if it will not stand the test of actual practice is a dream, or worse. The men produced are the sole test of right or wrong doctrines, the leaders and representative men are the highest proof of life or death in a teaching. It is idle to take the fine sentiments of books, which are very often most deceptive, and judge any question of human life and death by what the foremost men write about it. Our intellects are no judges of the practical bearing of such things; the product of law and teaching with living hearts can only be known afterwards, and when known by the result of the mixing the two, ought to be accepted as final. It is therefore, as reason tells us, a final proof without appeal of the falseness of the old doctrines, that every heathen

nation as it rose to a position free and powerful enough to give the rein to its own ideas and carry them out fully, perished. And the highest men in any system are the crowning effort of that system by which it can best be judged. This ought to be fully recognized. Take then an example of this law. When Imperial Rome was power-mistress of the world, mighty, intellectual, civilized, rich in all things, past and present, and possessed of outward beauty, strength, and luxury, the master of that world, if that power-system was any rational progress in good, represented the culminating point of happy excellence. There rose an emperor at that zenith, the very embodiment of the kingdom he ruled, intellectual, scornful, strong, a man of power, of solitary supremacy, Tiberius, whose history none can read without strange convictions of his fiendish grandeur. He has left us a state paper, one of the most curious in the world, written to the great Council of his empire, from the sunny shores where he lived in his voluptuous lair. The state paper which was read to the Senate opens in the following words, "My lords, may all the gods and goddesses destroy me by

a more deadly death than that which I feel I die daily, if I can tell what to write to you, or how to write to you, or what in the world I should not write to you to-day." Fearful words of remorse and scorn, remorse that could not be hidden, and scorn that cared not to hide it, from the topmost height of the great pyramid of sovereignty set up by man, the long result of ages of self-worship. But does not reason tell us exactly this, that we see man the visible king of the world, accountable to no higher power than can be seen, gaining knowledge and glorying in it, but met everywhere by the dread fact that power and knowledge, the greater they are, are the greater curse, unless directed and controlled by *right feeling* and unselfish, that is, power-rejecting, love. This is what man requires to learn, and it is not learnt once for all. There is no ground for supposing that the revolted intellect and power-worship will ever relax its efforts. Every generation has to learn it; the lesson in one shape or another is ever present; as yet the world seems barely to have got beyond the alphabet of this lesson. Yet men might just as well worship their thumbs, which have been

proved by anatomists to be the great bodily instrument distinctive of man's power, as their intellects, which are the soul instrument. But till the foremost nations of the world start as nations on true principles of life, and lay aside thumb-worship in its coarser forms at all events, there can be no hope of any great advance in the happiness of the human race. So this learning and unlearning, this pushing forwards of thumb-worship, till its successful and baffled votaries look in dismay for help, undone by success—this coming forward of God's gracious world-plan, its partial acceptance, its rejection again—must still be repeated in endless cycles, only that some gain in general practice, some deepening and widening of the area of acknowledged truth takes place each time. But the great inequality is a necessity, till man will learn the lesson that power-worship is a delusion, and cease to fall on his knees before his own thumb, bodily or intellectual. Knowledge self-discovered, so far from being the way by which man is to be developed, and the human race advanced in nobility, is absolutely, when taken from this point, the great barrier to development;

since true development is the return to the allegiance of the King of Love and Feeling, as shown in common life, amongst the weak and mean, in unselfish renunciation of power; and false development is the selfseeking power-worship of the knowledge-idolater, who clings to the old promise that had a sort of truth in it, "Your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods, *knowing* good and evil;" the old promise which first made man rebel and lose his place in creation. And reason tells us this is true in fact, whilst revelation explains how it came to pass.

IX.

THE facts of the world make it evident to a reasoning being, as has been shown above, that God has created and ever upholds all things, and that He cannot have put His highest creatures on an earth neither fitted to them, nor they to it. This again proves that intellect cannot be the great motive power, and that of necessity there must be the means of enabling all men, everywhere, and at all times, to fulfil their proper functions. These means are found in connexion with man's feelings, continuous in action, and working from the beginning. And the inexplicable network of circumstances and contradictions becomes disentangled and consistent, when taken to the light of a truth declared by God to man; the truth of man's fallen nature, of lust for power having caused a revolt from goodness and love.

This makes all plain to man's reason, and shows him the doings of all generations resolved into a

perpetual series of trials, in which the natural development of fallen man into a power-kingdom and thumb-worship was first allowed to work itself out in two great epochs, the one ending at the Flood, the other with Rome's gigantic sway, and her utter failure to bind the world together; and then the love-kingdom which had been gradually advancing, like silent light, with a history of its own, rose fully on the world in the person of the Son of God made man, and as man establishing a natural development towards good and self-sacrifice in His kingdom as an equipoise to the natural development to power and self-seeking and death in the old kingdom. From that time the course of the world has been changed, the trials have become reversed in appearance, instead of the quiet out-of-the-way solitary experiment of one family, or one small kingdom, lighted by divine truth, all the glory and might and progress of man have by degrees developed out of this new spiritual creation, which has gathered even its enemies into its outer circle; so that at this present time, no nation, that has any claim to rank amongst the foremost, is left outside. But inside the circle the

trials are carried on. If lust of power and the development of fallen nature predominate, a nation wanes and sinks back; if power, whether of fleshly hand, or intellect hand, is thoroughly kept in the servant's place, which is its place, and right feeling predominates, then a nation lives; lives, as continuing the unbroken living line of those who from the beginning have given up power-idolatry and revolt, and gone back to the first allegiance. For this kingdom never dies, it passes back in an unbroken series of believing men, a line of well-known history, through Christian ages to Christ, back through Judaism to the Patriarchs, back through the Patriarchs to Adam, and to the first promise. This vast mass of history and fact has a thread of supernatural and revealed truth running through it from end to end: remove that thread, and the facts fall apart; none are accounted for, no explanation is possible. The state of the world to-day as an historical fact cannot be disconnected from Christianity, or Christianity from Judaism and its historical facts, or Judaism from the Patriarchal history; and every one of these is permeated by divine interposition, divine

revelation, divine claims. Thus there is an uninterrupted living stream of certain ideas and beliefs beginning in remote ages, and a remote corner of earth, always enshrined in a human society, never existing as a mere dogma, and culminating in the present history of all the most enlightened nations on earth. Those ideas and doctrines throw aside power-worship; and the men who hold them, as far as they truly hold them, set themselves in direct antagonism to all the forces worshipped by the majority of the human race, and appeal to all mankind through the feelings common to all mankind.

The upholders of these conquering beliefs have always declared themselves messengers delivering a message. They have always disclaimed originality, they have always appealed to all in a way that all are qualified to try. Now these world-wide facts of history exactly fulfil the conditions which any person must frame for himself who believes in a God, and proceeds to examine the state of this earth and its inhabitants, and to theorise on the problem how to bring good home to every man. The doctrines declared satisfy man's reason and

reconcile, as has been shown above, the apparent contradiction of a race of creatures, one in nature, so divided and torn by differences of all kinds. The simple question remains: is the history of all these thousands of years true or false? It is not enough for critics to impugn this, and attack that. The true task of those who make their own unwillingness to understand an argument for rejecting or traducing the Scriptures and Christian society is this; they must reconstruct the world-history afresh on other terms and account for these statements that have hitherto been received having been received. If all this is a lie, or a mixture of truth and lies, then a lie or a mixture of truth and lies is the one continuous life, the great living power, which the highest intelligences visible on earth have lived on, now live on, have grown, and now grow by. To believe this is indeed to have a capacity for belief. The calmly sceptical mind finds it much easier to take and digest Scripture with all its difficulties, than the dish which enthusiastic philosophers, like children let loose, and roasting potatoes at a fire of weeds, relish so keenly, because it is their own cookery. Mankind

have a history and a growth. The record of this growth, and the laws of it, are found in the Scriptures; the facts of the world and of its series of dead empires, are found in common history. As history, both these entirely independent records in all results are identical. The difference is, that the world-history explains nothing, and records a series of deaths of empires that rise and perish, whilst the Scripture history explains everything, and its imperial subjects form an uninterrupted current of life, which never stops, only changes its form. It is not enough then to criticise what time has made intricate or unintelligible. The world-history must be rewritten, with a satisfactory explanation how the noblest and greatest nations and the noblest and greatest men have been produced by a farrago of lies, or a mixture of lies and truth. The question is, has the God of Truth permitted His best and highest on earth to be cherished into their higher state, to be made true—by a lie? If a man can believe this, reason at all events has ceased to be an arbiter for him. The common facts on which all life with its transactions is based have ceased to exist for him. He belongs

not to our human world. He is either above or below humanity, and in neither case amenable to human motives. Reason most plainly declares, when the proposition is once stated, that there is a God creator, that all He does must be true, that He cannot have left His highest creatures on earth without guidance, that a power which belongs only to few cannot be His guiding power, that a power which at its height has destroyed every kingdom yet known cannot be His power of life; that His reasoning human world must both have a choice between rival claims, and the means of making a right choice; that there must be a Law of God, and a set of men as guardians and embodiments of that Law, and that this Law of God must be the means by which life and truth and true greatness are preserved; that this Law of God must in all essential particulars be truth; that ardent pure love of truth cannot be the product of lies. Reason shows us two developments at work, the development of revolted man to thumb-worship and the idolatry of power, and the development of man returned to his allegiance towards a kingdom of love and life. The

History of the world is made up of the progress of these two. Up to the coming of Christ the first development predominated both in extent and outward greatness; since the Coming of Christ the second development is encircling all things. Their progress, their conflict, and the complications that arise from their conflicts and intertwinings form Modern History. But History is despised by philosophers if what are called philosophic writings are written by philosophers.

X.

HISTORY shows us clearly amongst the races and nations, one stream, and one only, of existence on earth living and progressing from the beginning. Empires rise, and empires fall, embodying, one after another, various principles; but one society, or family, or nation, or set of nations, for the circle enlarges as time goes on, which represents a principle, and has a written code of instruction, and a polity, lives, progresses, flourishes, exactly in proportion on the whole to its being a true embodiment of that principle and those instructions and polity. The Christian nations at the present moment are heirs of this undying inheritance. And if History shows us this, reason shows us no less clearly that this continuous life and progress cannot be the birth of a lie, or be based on a lie, or on a mixture of truth and lies. Lies are not the life-power in man.

Reason calls on those who seek to impugn the charters of this inheritance and polity, or to rival them, not to object, because they do not understand parts, or cannot harmonize and put together scattered pieces, but to reconstruct the known history of the world on a different basis. Reason calls on them to explain at the same time, how it is that all the purity, holiness, and progress of the world has at least been interwoven with the system to which they object falsehood, even if they deny that the system has produced it. Reason calls on them to lay aside the tacit assumption of omniscience, which underlies so many of the cavils at things which the critics do not understand; to remember also that in a narration of facts, if the fact really did happen, (which is a matter of testimony,) the improbability that it should have happened is gone. And the wildest possible hypothesis which serves to show that the fact stated to have happened could have happened as it is stated, however valueless, is of equal value with the most plausible theory which wants to make out that it did not. The real and only proof of a fact, or against it, is the testimony. The

testimony of the truth of the facts of religion is simply the history of the world. When objectors and philosophers have finished the first most urgent task of writing a new world-history, without Christianity, as it states itself to be, and as it actually exists as a fact open to examination, it will be time to listen to questions of probability and improbability, and to weigh arguments arising from our ignorance of old times.

It is also in accordance with reason that any subject of investigation should be investigated in accordance with its own claims, as Aristotle observed long ago, that it is absurd to ask for demonstrative truth from rhetoric, or to accept probabilities from mathematics. Aristotle also observes that no man can judge who does not know a subject, and has not educated his mind for judgment, and peremptorily warns off, and scornfully dismisses from his lectures on moral philosophy every one who is of loose habits and an ill-disciplined mind.

There is reason in this. It obviously is absurd for a sensual man to set himself up as a judge of purity, and so on. But if this is reason, in re-

ceiving a heathen philosopher, it remains reason in receiving the Word of God. The Word of God claims to be judged by those who live by it, "Do my will and you shall know." No person who lives by Scripture doubts its divinity. The Word of God claims to be a living power of feeling and love, and reason must admit in this case, as in the case of the heathen Aristotle, that ἕκαστος κρίνει καλῶς ἃ γιγνώσκει, a man must know his subject before he judges it, and that a man does not know his subject who applies the laws of feeling to mathematics and intellectual knowledge, or of mathematics and intellectual knowledge to feeling.

Now Christianity asserts that the motive power of the world is love, and that man has been created to love truth.

The teaching of Christianity therefore, whether written or oral, will have been framed with the view of testing love of truth.

But the intention of an ordinary history is to impart a knowledge of facts.

The intention of ordinary teaching is to cultivate the intellect.

This difference in the purpose for which they are written will affect the documents and writings of Christianity exceedingly. The Scriptures are books written with the view of testing man's love of truth. "He that hath ears to hear let him hear" is their motto. They use no force even of demonstration, they are not intended simply to give man more knowledge, or to satisfy man's craving for information. Their main lessons, indeed, of the divine power and goodness, and of man's happy dependence on God are plain enough; but as knowledge of truth, divorced from love of truth, is devilish, the Scriptures are framed to hide as much as to reveal, or rather only to reveal what they have to reveal in proportion to the readiness of the heart to love the revelation. They follow in this the example of Christ, who was very careful not to show forth His glory amongst unbelievers, and for this reason constantly forbade the publication of the mighty works He did; lest the unloving knowledge of those who heard should be to them a curse. He did not wish to prove Himself to be the Son of God, but to be discovered by loving watchful hearts.

So also does Scripture work. It has been well observed[1] that "as Almighty God is ever knowing and dealing with the thoughts of the hearts, His words have some special reference to them. Nor can we ever be sure that the object of divine words is merely to impart knowledge. They may have other objects which are better attained by our difficulty of comprehending them, than they could have been by their clear meaning."

Moreover, as love of truth has to be tested, anything that is a fair test of love of truth falls within the scope of their plan. This would of itself imply the possibility of much difficulty and obscurity. Nay more, it would not necessarily form any part of the divine plan to shield the narrative from errors of fact, where errors of fact did not in any way impair the main truth. For example, it would not be a necessity that an inspired Apostle, writing by inspiration, should be protected from asserting on imperfect human memory or knowledge, that four thousand men were fed with five loaves when five thousand was the actual number, or with six loaves, when four

[1] Isaac Williams.

was the actual number, but it would be a necessity that no exaggeration or diminution should take place which in any way affected the credit of the miracle, and made that seem miraculous which was not truly so, but due to ordinary means well managed.

This last would be a lie either implied or expressed. It might conceivably form part of God's plan to permit human inaccuracies as a test of true heart-love for truth, able to discern truth and love it on its broad great claims through such accidents. It would not in any way be necessary that men should have any conscious knowledge of the working of such test-work, or guess even at its existence. It would be enough that the hearts were tried whether they knew how they were tried or not. The non-knowledge might form the most valuable part of the trial. I do not say that God has dealt with us in this precise way. That depends on how much in His allwise counsel man was seen to be able to bear with advantage; but it is quite clear that up to the point man could bear with advantage, it is consistent with the plan as a test of feeling that

man should be tried, and possibly tried in this way. If man's discernment of truth was not tried by Scripture, the Scripture would cease to be a test of man's love of truth, that is, would cease to do what God meant it to do. It is obvious if these conclusions are correct, how childish many of the criticisms of Scripture become. Many of the most acute intellectual critics criticise and condemn the Scriptures for precisely doing their intended work in the best way, for not being written on a basis of fact-narrative and information, for not satisfying the intellect, for presenting many difficulties. But it is the essence of their plan that there should be many difficulties for the intellect, much need of faith and humility for the heart, but full satisfaction for the loving heart, but not the slightest shadow of moral falseness. Fact-mistakes are possible, lies impossible; whether they are lies in fact or in moral conclusions. The Scriptures, then, are designed as a perpetual test and appeal to love of Truth in man, as a perpetual humiliation of the intellect as far as it usurps God's throne, as a perpetual veil before the unbelieving mind, as a perpetual re-

velation of fresh glory to those whom love prepares to receive it, and as light to the heart that can see. The motive throughout Scripture is love of good growing from the sight of what is good, *because* man is created originally to love good. And Scripture to the good man is nothing else but a perpetual unveiling of truth to be seen by the heart that cares to see, as plainly as light by the eye; and for a like reason, that each is created for the other; and truth is as utterly hidden from the heart that does not care to see, as light from the blind. If we look to facts we shall at once perceive that man is created with a love for truth of this kind, quite independent of all calculation whether there is any loss or gain in it, power to be got or given up. Nay, the moment calculation begins, love goes. And this highest created faculty in man has nothing to do with self-interest however disguised. The *summum bonum* of man is not his own happiness, or any name whatever which implies, however remotely, a calculation of loss or gain. The fact that God has ultimately made happiness follow man's highest faculty, though it may serve to blind intellectual man

to the truth does not alter the truth. Entirely unselfish love for truth is the first and highest be-all and end-all for man, unaffected by the fact that it is happiness also. Light is light, though the free splendour of the summer sun, as he marches over happy lands when morning draws the shadows from the hills, be to some nothing more than the hope of a market-place coming, all prisoned into one narrow thought of bushels, and barley, and beer. Take any great deeds, any truly noble deeds, analyse them, say in any instance whether any thought of self can have been in the heroic doer, or is in the thrill which the hearer feels for it. I will quote two instances from occurrences in the Indian mutiny which have fallen within the range of my own knowledge, one the deed of an Englishman, the other of a Sikh. They will exemplify what has been stated. One quiet Sunday morning in June, English men and women met as usual in church, and the familiar prayers were on their lips with many a thought perhaps of friends far away and their English homes, when a message came that the mutineers were on them. There was just time

for the defenceless congregation to escape into an untenable fort, a helpless, unarmed multitude, saved for a moment, a little space left for them to look on death before they died. Amongst that throng of families an hour before in peace, but now with the sword so near, there was one man of high rank, well mounted, who had a chance for his own life, but he would not leave them, he calmly waited till the mutineers came up, and then stepped out on the wall, proclaimed his rank, his titles, his name, a name well known in India, a name honoured and revered; and he strove to make terms with those murderers by offering to give himself up at once for them to work their pleasure on, if they would let the rest go. Surely never, save in the courts of heaven, have titles and rank been named more nobly, never have they been more full of honour. When at Mohumdee Mr Thomason did this, where was the self-interest? When we read it, where is the self-interest in judging it noble and loving it?

Once more, when the English judge knew that the mutiny was going to break out, but could not show his knowledge as no open sign had been

given, and had to go to his court as usual unarmed—to die as he believed, to be murdered, alone, without a struggle; then how his heart rose within him when his poor native Christian servant, unbidden, as he went to his seat, silently followed him, strode up through those bloodthirsty men and took his stand behind his master's chair, armed to the teeth to defend him or die with him, "amongst the faithless faithful only he." Do we think of the loss or the gain as that story of dauntless love is told us? did he, when he did the deed? It is the thing itself, the light that is loved, the unselfish greatness, not a calculation of profit either in this world or the world to come.

That man knows not love who can say that love is self-interest disguised. Man's true life is the learning to love rightly. This is progress. This makes the earth a home for better, and therefore for happier beings, though I admit it is not possible to separate the two. Would a perfect knowledge of Greek do this? or of astronomy? or chemistry? or the origin of species? any or all of them? or any other intellectual gain which is boldly called truth? All the discoveries that ever

have been made, or ever shall be made by man's busy brain, will not heal one pang of his wounded heart. Does the dying cottager care for the last new planet? or the dying philosopher either, if his heart is sad or guilty? The things belong to different worlds; but these are facts, and it is not philosophic or rational to disregard facts, and put the phenomena of Life-science on one side, and all that reason confirms to us of the character of life, and the message of God the highest Living Being to man His highest living creature on earth. Because the method of proof is different, it does not make the proof less strong. Two and two make four. This is one kind of proof. The open eye sees light. That is another kind of proof. No one can assert that light is less certain to the seeing eye than $2 \times 2 = 4$ is to the intellect; or, than the light of a true deed is to the heart. It is true the eye does not learn light, and cannot communicate light; and the heart does not learn truth, and cannot communicate the feeling of truth. Man loves, and no one doubts it. Man loves truth, and science disregards it. But day by day men are visible, if science has the eyes to see them,

whose lives attest that the light of justice, of holiness, of purity, of humility, of truth has dawned upon them, and whose lips attest that this is from Christ. Why should they be disbelieved? On what rational theory are the truest and purest of mankind put out of court as unworthy of credence, as idiots in fact, or liars? Certainly there is nothing in common between the intellect gradually discovering or thinking it discovers new facts either in the material or moral world, which it calls truth, and the heart receiving the flash of the light of truth, that is, of the nature and dealings of God, which is light and truth, and loving it. There is no inconsistency whatever in supposing it possible for an animal to acquire knowledge, at least philosophy cannot allege there is; for philosophy at all events often puts man on the level of an animal. But in good truth an animal may well be imagined capable of acquiring knowledge, and developing by doing so into a far more powerful animal, and if such was the world plan, arriving at any conceivable capacity for discovery of facts, for calculation, for logical acuteness. Such an animal would intellectually be far stronger than

man, but so is a horse in body. The inconsistency is in supposing that any extension of strength either in body or intellect would make an animal more than an animal, or pass across the awful boundary between the knowledge of things created, which is intellectual knowledge, and the feeling of the nature of God the Creator, which is the knowledge of Truth. The knowing animal would not pray or worship because it knew of wonderful things; it would not be a bit the more advanced in that other world of the feeling of Divinity, of the nature of God that is reached by feeling, because God has made the one answer to the other as light to an eye that sees. No conceivable intellect would do this, any more than in the body strengthening the hand would make the hand into an eye. Man who feels and loves, man able to see God, can by no degradation be made an animal only capable of calculation, reasoning, and analysis of matter. And the calculating animal can by no extension be made into man who loves. God, now as of old, is not in the great and strong wind that rends the mountain and breaks in pieces the rocks before the Lord. The complete know-

ledge of the winds and rocks would not find God. And after the wind comes the earthquake, but the Lord is not in the earthquake. A complete knowledge of the earthquake and its forces would not find God. And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord is not in the fire. A complete knowledge of the fire, or of all fires in the sky or on earth would not find God. And after the fire a still small voice. Then, Elijah-like, the true spirit, the man of the true heart, humbly wraps his face in his mantle, and comes out, and hears and answers, for the Lord is in the still small voice that strikes straight on the heart; the Lord is in the light which at once is seen, and loved by the heart-eye: and is not discovered in the material things that herald His coming.

There is no knowledge like this: no demonstrative dead facts compare in intensity of conviction with sight, with sight seeing light, and with the living eye within, the pure heart, the clear unblinded love, which sees God, on which truth has flashed, in which divine truth dwells enshrined, a perpetual fountain of light; so that men who once see cannot deny their sight, but

stand, or have stood, calm, unmoved, gentle, full of peace, at the fire, at the sword, at any torture of deed or word, in old days, or now. This, reason tells us, is truth; but finding out facts about matter and then spinning theories, and hanging them about creation, has nothing to do with life. It may be very useful, very interesting, very necessary, but it deals with matter and things seen. It is not life, or life-science. Reason tells us this. God declares He has revealed His truth to man. Reason takes the facts of the world combined with this declaration and compels us to assent to it. Reason sends us to the feelings as the sovereign power, the great motive power. God deals with the feelings, and requires us to subordinate our intellect to right feeling, as man does in fact, by an unconscious process, in the support of the natural life. For man eats to support life; reason tells us this is necessary, and sometimes prescribes limits, but reason bears witness that in health hunger, not reason, is the moving and directing power.

When philosophy bids us cast aside every thing but the *siccum lumen,* if the direction is

given in life-science, it is much the same as telling a man to open his ears to intellectual proofs, but to be sure carefully to shut his eyes in his passage through the world against all he sees. There is no objection to doing so, for those who like to do it. There is no objection to their treating the Scriptures as an intellectual problem, and assuming the human intellect to be *μέτρον πάντων*; only as the plan is irrational, and carried out in utter disregard of the facts and theories of the subject it handles in this lordly fashion, there is an objection to such people requiring the submission of those who think reason as far as it reaches a safe guide. And it is hard to see why rational beings should be taunted because they take the facts of the world, and are willing to receive a reasonable explanation of them, even if it does come from God; though not hard to understand why self-constituted omniscience could taunt them. Reason tells us this is a matter of course; and no reasonable being can be dissatisfied with what is in accordance with reason, but will accept this state of things as one more proof that true development is utterly opposed in theory

and fact to every form of power-worship. Reason is perfectly willing to listen to the sneers of philosophers, and accepts them as proof of its own conclusions. But reason does not require that any one should believe nonsense which smacks of the philosopher's stone.

XI.

It was shown in the earlier chapters that the conditions of human life rendered it absolutely certain, that the intellect could not be the great moving-power of human progress; and that the reasoning powers of man were totally incapable of raising him, as a race, to a higher state; in fact, that there was no true progress in intellectual discoveries. But when we pass from the lower ground of purely human effort to the government of God and His revelations to mankind, there also the same argument holds good. Man must dethrone and set aside his intellect as a judge and master in religion, and retain it as an obedient pupil and servant. Fire is a good servant and bad master, says the proverb; and so is the intellect. The intellect itself tells us this truth, if we consult it truly. All mankind ought to be brought to happy life. But not one in a million is an intellectual judge, not one in a million is

able to acquire the knowledge of evidence, or to weigh it when acquired. Under any conceivable circumstances the great laws that demand so much time for the support of man's natural life will prevent the proportion of intellectual monasticism from being perceptibly altered as regards the working practical majority. The lordly abbots of the intellectual world are but few in number. If this is true, the same incapacity which we found before, must attend man in receiving intellectually the revelation of God also. It is clearly impossible for each man to hew out his own Christ from Scripture. The majority, the vast majority, must take their Christ from others. The more men face the facts of the world, the more they will find that in all things, religion included, this faith in others is a necessity. The real question is, what guarantees have we for a right faith in others? Mere knowledge gives no such guarantee. The fruit of the Tree of Knowledge does not hang down now for any one to pluck as when Eve took it, but has retired into the topmost branches, and is as hard to get at as a cocoa-nut. It is pleasant to watch from below the movements of the agile

intellects that can reach it; pleasant to catch what they graciously fling down; but when we are told to leave our ploughing, and sowing, and reaping, by which we live, and devote ourselves to climbing as the sole worthy object of existence, then we begin to look at the tree and its hard smooth stem, and to look at the fruit of the tree, however pleasant it may taste, and consider seriously whether there is any ground for believing the oracles in the topmost branches, and for fitting horny working hands to the polished bole, and leaving the land untilled. Reason cannot believe that there is. But if intellect clearly cannot be our guide in common life or in God's revelation, the question assumes this form: Has not God provided for this seeming deficiency, and fitted His means to His material, and declared His will to unintellectual man in such a way as to effect His object, and not left him, first of all, utterly at sea in his own person with an intellectual choice to be made, and no intellect to make the choice; or, secondly, left him utterly at sea with respect to teachers, quite without sign-post as to whether the Christ of *Ecce Homo*, or the Christ

of Renan, or of any other writer or sect, who have carved a Christ out of Scripture, is to be his Christ? Surely reason tells us that God would not be God, had He not in some way provided for this difficulty. That way we will now consider in outline, dismissing finally the idea that the intellect is a master to lead us to God.

The Scriptures, it has been shown above, are a test of feeling, designed to prove whether man loves rightly or not. But if this was all that was given us it would be open to the objection, that living breathing man, with his warm humanity and quick sensibility, would be tested very imperfectly by a book, even if all could and did read that book. From the very beginning divine truth has been enshrined in a human society, first, in the family; this was Patriarchal life; next, in a nation, this was the natural bond of race; lastly, in a spiritual kingdom bound together by the spiritual bond of transmitted spirit-birth. It forms no part of the present discussion to note any of the objections raised by man to the conditions God has appended from age to age to His revelation and gifts, beyond observing that these con-

ditions invariably, in one form or another, demand humility in the receiver, and also that, as being tests of love, they invariably start with a broad great certainty of glory and beauty combined with many human shortcomings and unlovely beginnings, which serve to test the strength of the love and try its sincerity. Difficulties in fact of two kinds are a part of the plan; firstly, difficulties arising from man's rebel will which is being tested, and which is averse and feels repugnance to the will of God, even when in itself that will is obviously gracious; this is Naaman's difficulty, when he refused to wash in Jordan and be cleansed of his leprosy: and secondly, difficulties which God intends as stepping-stones to higher truth, but which nevertheless in their first aspect front man as a solid wall of rock, and require his willing exertion to get up on them, and thus turn them into steps instead of barriers. Of this kind was our Saviour's discourse on His Body and Blood being the life of the world; after which "many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him." And there is a third source of difficulty worth noting, though in its nature transient, the

difficulty that arises from the human vessels in any generation or number of generations distorting in their practice the divine truth they were meant to illustrate; this is the difficulty the Jewish priests created, when they used the commission given them by God in order to receive the offerings of the people for their own lusts; or which the Jew in the wilderness created, when he kept the manna given from heaven by God, contrary to God's will, till it bred worms and stank. Even bread from heaven stank, when misused, and became a loathsome and disgusting putrefaction. But the cure of this difficulty is obvious; go back to the divine command and purpose. Do not throw away God's gifts and rush back to Egypt for food because God's manna becomes a crawling abomination in unholy hands. Nothing is more common than to hear this strange argument advanced. Perhaps it is not too much to say that one half of religious controversy may be summed up under the brief formula, "The manna stinks, *therefore* let us run back to Egypt."

But to resume. All mankind require to be reached by means which all mankind can under-

stand. God has always employed such means. God from the beginning has made man exemplify to his fellow-man the truths of salvation, and has always had His living witnesses moving on earth in increasing numbers, until He provided finally for the whole earth becoming peopled by an organized society which should have power enough to do away with all separating influences of race or social differences in carrying on its work. This society God furnished with all means needed for its enduring continuous life, and also gave it examples of progressive working which could be adapted to all characters, a code of laws to direct its polity, yet which should not interfere with human governments, and the fullest proof of its all coming from Him, and being His will. Thus furnished with all things necessary this brotherhood proceeds to its work. The willing receptive spirit is to be moved, enlightened, strengthened, tested. No force is to be used. But all agencies that can touch the heart are employed from perfect fear up to perfect love through the wide range of the great heart-diapason. The Scriptures contain this instrumental power. Now we speak of

the writings of men who have long since died as living and immortal, and in a sense truly; for the wondrous power of kindling the hearts of living men still resides in the writings of the dead; but if this is true of dead men and their writings, how much more of the word of the Living God? There it is absolute truth; the word is a living word, and every line burns with fire divine; and marvellous speaking shapes of men who lived on earth, as we live, are passed before the eye, and into the heart of those who can find room for them. Light flashes, and men see: and God's living messengers, wherever His word has rule, however slightly, pass to and fro applying the heavenly torch, now better now worse, according as it has glowed in their own lives or not. Life in the heart answers to life in the divine word, till there is a great cloud of witnesses of all nations and all times "encompassing us about." Then slowly, and by degrees, the great central figure of all the ages, in its full reality, is unveiled to the seeing heart, the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world; and spirit-power passes into common life and daily tasks, till an abiding perpetual pre-

sence absorbing all generations from the beginning to the end is visible, and the kingdom of heaven on earth in men with all its perfect organized government becomes a a great reality, wanting no fresh attestation, for God has once for all established his channels of grace in a living society which he animates evermore.

The practical conclusion from these considerations is clear. The weapon God intended man to wield for the good of his fellow-man is a living life. This is the only writing the vast majority can understand at all. Unselfishness and humility, the only virtues never parodied by the heathen, traced in characters of daily work can be read by the meanest, the most ignorant, the most vile. Theoretically these shine brightest, and are most enduring, where the doctrine is most true, and the teaching best. Practically, God the Spirit King dwells not in temples made with hands, is bound by no cords, is confined by no walls of fortress sheepfolds, built even by Himself, however necessary for the sheep, but passes from heart to heart purifying and refining *as far as each heart can bear it.* The pure heart

always has the tendency to return to the most perfect channels of God's grace, to the truest and most spiritual teaching; the most perfect channels of God's grace, and the truest and most spiritual teaching, have always the tendency to produce the purest heart. But the evil inherent in man perpetually disturbs the balance, to man's eyes hopelessly, and beyond possibility of judgment. Subjectively, every man is bound, with an earnestness proportioned to the solitary greatness of the object, to search as a pupil the claims of the best teaching in his opinion near him, which professes to be divine, and to live by that, and go forward. In this world of tangled threads, where true divine means of life, heavenly manna, can be disjoined from true life, and where true life can be disjoined in some degree from true means of life, it suffices as a practical rule that the earnest heart should work out its known best honestly. It ought to suffice as a practical rule, that, until all work of building up on unoccupied heart-ground is finished, no work of pulling down or hindering earnest effort should be begun. The walls of falsehood, if left alone in the midst of

living work, fall by themselves. No proselytizing should ever be attempted against other teachers, lest that curse of Christ come upon us, "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." A curse of wide significance, strong against all who are more busied in party antagonisms than in building up truth; strong against all who under religious names strive to gain adherents, rather than to win mankind to love. Strong against all who teach their followers how to convict others, instead of how to live themselves. There is a great example in Holy Scripture of earnest and successful work under circumstances as repulsive to zeal and love of truth as it is possible to conceive; that is, if zeal and love of truth require us to attack what is base, and false, and powerful. The example is that of St. Paul working as a missionary at Ephesus. St. Paul lived for two years in that metropolis of splendid iniquity; in the great city where the most beautiful, the most gorgeous idolatry of the ancient world dwelt in its mar-

vellous home; in the great city where the magic power, the real magic power of eastern devil-worship was enthroned in wealth and glory; in the great city where sensuality and lust, which now hides in dens of our worst and most neglected city haunts, queened it in palaces and ruled in honour. Here the Apostle lived and taught for two years daily; daily seeing sights which combined the bestial passions of a savage tribe with the magnificent pageantry of intellectual supremacy. No one doubts that he was brave, brave as the best soldier who ever led a forlorn hope; no one doubts his energy, his intellect. This man of heroic mould, this fire of dauntless courage, this great intellectual champion of truth, taught in this splendid devil-home for two years, and at the end of that time the chief magistrate of that city could still the furious crowd by saying, that these men, meaning St. Paul and his companions, had said no word against their temple and their goddess. Most assuredly this was true; the true missionary work of the great Apostle had been positive, building up Christ, speaking of all things holy, and pure, and lovely, so that

men might love and follow truth; he wasted no words *against* the vileness, he wasted no strength in attack, sure that the walls of falsehood would fall like those of Jericho, as soon as the love of Christ had filled the heart. This is a holy teacher's work, building up. A holy searcher's work is the same as regards others; as regards self it is an earnest testing whether the message purporting to be divine is true or not; testing it chiefly by its fruits, for the majority are unable to do more, and clinging devotedly to the best representation of holy work within reach. For a religious name must never be allowed to excuse bitterness or dishonesty. Practices which in worldly contests are mean or unfair, when done under religious names are fruits which tell the tree they come from really, all the worse fruits because of the religious name. There are in modern times, as of old, men who for their own advantage, however disguised or however mixed the motive, seek to cast out devils in the name of Christ, and lead active, zealous lives, and speak high words of holiness and truth; and the result unhappily is that the devil has grown wiser, and instead of falling on

them with the cry, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" rewards them with the Pharisees' portion—the praise and support of men. So far of individual duties. As regards intercourse and communion, these principles would lead to the conclusion that the teachers of each community should preach and practise with all their hearts the great truths of the doctrine they believe, preserving clearly and distinctly the main distinctive features of their creed; but, that the moment they are in a private capacity, they as well as every member of their community should be held to be in communion, and be at liberty to take part, if they pleased, with any other community holding the great doctrinal truths contained in the Apostles' Creed, however they might differ as to the ways and means by which God is pleased to work out these truths on earth. Where the practice of a society was narrow and unlovely, such communion would as a fact become in that instance impossible to all who did not exactly agree with the doctrine. Where the practice is catholic and loveable, communion would be possible with great differences of opinion and

belief on the ways by which Christ works His will. This is a simple law and a practical law applicable to every case that can arise, giving a broad common standing ground to all who desire to love truth and lead true lives; binding together every earnest heart, whilst compelling no one to give up distinctive belief, or in any special case to hold intercourse with those whose practice is abhorrent to his feelings. No one can think for a moment that the growth of thought and march of time is likely to break down the positive convictions of different minds on distinctive forms of doctrines; but there is much room for belief that the great world-wide war against or for evil should lead all those who love Christ to leave off attacking each other, and make them recognise as friends everyone who is trying to build up good. No blow of tongue or hand has ever really advanced truth; God leaves the pulling down to the ungodly, "which is a sword of His."

XII.

THE last chapters have dealt very briefly with the scheme of God revealed to man when the learning process became the dominant one. It is necessary however to return to the parallel process of the unlearning, and to say a few words on the forms taken by man's rebellious will both in old and modern times. The principle which underlies every merely human effort, is rebellion from love and the worship of power; a development of self in opposition to love and to God's revealed will. There never has been a period in the history of the world in which God has not had His will known amongst mankind. History shows this, but it also is involved in the very idea of God. It is not possible that God has created a world and left that world unprovided for. This statement obviously holds good with the lower creation. All living creatures below man by the laws of their nature are completely

provided with all things necessary for the full perfection of their life, and for its continuance. That man, the highest creature, should be left unprovided, is an absurdity that only requires to be stated to be seen. This would not only make his Creator not God, but would make his Creator treat him worse than the lower animals of the same creation. And man has been left unprovided, if he has been placed in a world totally incapable of satisfying his nature without any guidance from God to bring him to a state which would do so. And this guidance must of necessity be co-extensive with the whole race, and able to bring every individual of the race to a right state, and not merely a few, or only the later generations of the race. The will of God then has always been known on earth, and side by side with this, in all the early ages, there is idol worship. There is something very strange at first sight, and very irrational, in idolatry. The universality of the practice shows that it was not really strange; its adoption by the noblest intellects the world has ever known proves it in a sense not irrational. And if it is neither strange,

nor irrational, it is quite certain that a practice so universal will not have died out of the world, but will still continue, essentially the same, whatever the outward form of it may be. Reason shows us plainly that the reasoning faculties with which man is gifted could not by any possibility develop the human race, as a race, into a better state than that in which they started. Nay more, reason and experience prove conclusively that the knowledge of good can be dissociated from the love of good for its own sake, and that an increase of knowledge under such conditions develops man into something approaching to a devil. Reason and revelation show us a system set on foot by God to counteract this tendency, to destroy the power-kingdom as soon as in any case it cast off love, and to test love of good, as good, for its own sake. This is God's plan. In order to carry this out, He made known His will. But the early knowledge of God was limited to the revelation of God as Creator and Sovereign of the world. The first teaching confines itself to this truth and the consequences that flow from it. The sole question put before man at the beginning was,

"Will you acknowledge the King revealed, and the conditions He imposes, or not?" But these Scriptures which reveal this sovereignty of God, and His claim on man, also tell us that man had already rebelled against his God, and had set up a king who promised knowledge in His place. The question therefore was a critical one. It demanded the unconditional surrender of the rebel will, and the unconditional acknowledgment of the true Creator and His laws, however unpalatable they might be to human pride. Men either had to obey and humbly receive the Creator, or find out a new Creator for themselves by an intellectual choice. This was the alternative. It was neither strange nor irrational therefore, given that man refused to bow his will, that the knowledge-seeking intellect should busy itself in finding a new Creator to suit its own views.

Idolatry therefore is in principle not a corruption but a rebellion from true religion. Following this clue we can see *à priori* what course it would take. In doctrine it will be antagonistic to revealed religion, and set up a new Creator in God's place. It will however retain much of

the moral truths at first, especially those that have an intellectual grandeur or beauty in them. These will become traditional as myths and axioms. It will also take more or less of the hero traditions, and great historical facts of the human race, and interweave them with its system. Idolatry therefore is of a twofold character; first it is a rebellion from the main truth of revealed religion, the great doctrine of the Creator God. On this point it is in direct antagonism, and is not a corruption: secondly it is a corruption of the moral truths and history of man under the revealed religion, and in this part will retain many traces of it. This is exactly what we find. Man looked about for a new Creator, and took the sun, and moon, and stars, and powers of nature, the dead forces by which the living God works, and deified them. This has been abundantly proved by Professor Max Müller, Mr Coxe, and others. This was the antagonism to God. Every scholar is able to judge of the second part, the corruption of moral truths and the historical traditions.

Many of the old myths are exceedingly beautiful and striking. They belong to the earliest

literature. At the time they first appear before us they form portions of the religion of a simple people, and were not understood, but were more or less a part of worship. And they were quite alien to the splendid literary epochs of later times, and were speculated on and explained by the philosophers then, just as philosophically as they are now. Yet these wondrous embodiments of wisdom and morality, for many are such, ought, if they were intellect-births belonging to the development of national intellect, to have been produced when the national intellect was at its highest, and not to have been old worshipped mysteries at a time when the nations were beginning their life, and to have died out more and more as that life rose and culminated in intellectual strength.

The first step in idolatry then was to set up the forces of nature as a new Creator whilst retaining many moral truths and historical traditions. The next step was scarcely less obvious. The powers of nature were personified; men invested them with imaginary life; and then, as life without form is unintelligible to man as long as he deems himself

the highest, they were clothed in human form ; and so the process was continued ; the farther the generations got from the knowledge of the revelation they had despised, the baser became the fables and the forms which embodied this worship. All however retained to the end the central idea of sacrifice, sacrifice so foreign to nature which dedicates and does not sacrifice, but which is so entirely the heart-core of revelation that even the dissentients never shook off that primitive relic of God's truth.

Idolatry therefore was natural, and as a system may be defined as an intellectual effort to reason out a God Creator after the rejection of the true God through unwillingness to submit either the intellect or will to Him. It is the application of intellect to religion, not as a pupil to examine its claims, but as a master to fashion them. Following this track we see clearly the perpetual though unsuspected reign of idolatry. As soon as Christ in the fulness of time appeared as a Redeemer, bringing the revelation of Redemption and Atonement, the personal idea of the Creator became merged in the revelation of Atonement

and Redemption, which do not of necessity involve the idea of a divine person at first sight, and which have a human intellectual side in the vast range of their practical application to human life. The ground therefore has shifted; the new claim of God is that man shall acknowledge his utterly lost sinful condition, his fallen nature imperfectible in itself, broken off from the life fountain of God, and shall acknowledge first the Incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ, Man and God, as the Giver back of life, and next the means by which He gives back life.

Accordingly since this revelation the old personal idolatry which hewed out a new Creator for itself has nearly disappeared, and the rebel-intellect has applied itself diligently to hew out for itself either a new Saviour or new conditions of salvation, and idolatry has dropped the outer shape as immaterial, and taken the purely intellectual garb of impugning the revealed conditions or asserting conditions of its own. And as in old time, God's main tools, the sun, and moon, and natural powers were the readiest objects of worship, so in modern times God's main tools,

scriptures, sacraments, ministrations, &c., have furnished the great objects of idolatry. But, as time wears on, as of old men descended to wood, and stone, and animals, so now we are descending to forces, and the perfectibility of man, and self-development from apes, and philosophy, for our Gods. But the root is the same. Nay, it may happen that the true Redeemer may be worshipped under an intellectual idol shape, as in the wilderness the golden calf, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt;" no fresh god, but only a human representation carved out of Scripture by human intellect. Such a book as "Ecce Homo" is open to this charge. It claims to be the work of a man[1] "who will reconsider the whole subject from the beginning, and accept those conclusions, not which church doctors or even apostles have sealed with their authority, but which the facts themselves critically weighed appear to warrant." A pleasantly uncritical statement with its verbal fallacies; but that matters little. Grant it to be intellectually

[1] Preface to first Edition.

perfect, instead of itself its own best overthrow, the claim the writer makes for himself he must concede to others. Any intellect shape hewn out of Scripture by the individual man as a judge set over even Apostles, instead of a pupil to examine the great Messengers and their Message, is theoretically equally valuable, though the result be in the one case the great statue of Christ which the writer of "Ecce Homo" has raised on an earthen pedestal of his own instead of the Scripture rock, or in the other, the crocodile which Renan would have us fall down to. The process is wrong altogether whatever the immediate result may be. No such intellect claim is allowed. The feelings, love of good and hatred of evil, are appealed to by God. A message is sent and man is required humbly to search whether these things be so or not, and to receive or reject the offer; not to rob the messenger of his goods, carry them off into the desert, sort them, pick and choose, fling away on his own authority what he dislikes, and on his own authority take the remainder and keep it without leave. But this kind of idolatry will never cease; in prin-

ciple it is the same as the old, only man in old times had to find a new Creator, in these last days a new Redemption or Redeemer. The root of all idolatry is revolt. The revolted intellect refuses as a pupil to test humbly the commands and conditions of God, and proceeds to set up a new God of its own. In the beginning, as we have seen, of necessity a substitute for the Creator had to be found, this is a personal idea, and the first idols accordingly were of this personal character. Afterwards a substitute for redemption had to be found; this is not necessarily, or primarily even, a personal idea, but can take the shape of a mental problem; hence arose all the heresies and schisms of the first Christian centuries, beginning, however, as was natural with the confusion and mixture of the two ideas in Gnosticism, which was a series of intellectual dreams of a new creation and new redemption combined. And throughout all generations these idolatries, whether ancient or modern, pick and choose, and rob revelation of its moral and spiritual truths, as far as they serve their purpose; and, whilst scorning or politely putting aside God who gave the know-

ledge, calmly filch the knowledge given, call it their own, say they discovered what they have only corrupted, and seek to maintain their rebellion on the stores they have taken from the King. Idolatry is, from first to last, an intellect-revolt against the supremacy of God.

XIII.

THERE was a gentleman in old time, we are told, of a philosophic turn of mind, who after consideration decided that he was very strong, and that so much good strength ought not to be wasted. He saw also, the more he pondered on the matter, that as people in general were much less strong than himself, it was the duty of a philosopher to turn this superiority of strength to advantage. On examining the world with a closer scrutiny he observed that mankind were scandalously unequal in bodily proportions, and on the whole, foolishly contented, or sunk in stupid despair before this incongruous state of affairs. The result will have been anticipated. Being a philosopher, and strong, he determined to remedy the evil. No living being within his ken was his master, so it was an obvious conclusion that he was master of the world. He took thought; he contrived a bed, exactly his own measurement, he caught his fool-

ish neighbours, he made them all of one length. The process was simple, the short he stretched, the tall he cut off, and he succeeded admirably excepting in one point, his neighbours generally died; for he had disregarded the conditions of life. These conditions were not subject to measurements. What had he to do with them? This was rather a defect; but there were plenty of people to experiment on, so he continued his experiments, and doubtless, had he lived long enough, would have succeeded to his satisfaction in producing a race naturally stretchable or cut-offable; for he could point to examples where he had not wholly failed. Now on the assumption that strength is a true title-deed of supremacy, and the fact of no visible living superior a just claim of confidence, I contend that there was nothing in the least irrational in these proceedings of Procrustes; the more so, as they brought him much wealth, and not a little submission. The reasoning was rude, but considering the state of science, not more rude than the claims of knowledge, advanced now by men who cannot make a fly in a creation they dispose of so summarily.

The reasoning was narrow, but considering the state of knowledge, not more narrow than that of men who talk of the universe as if it had all been cut out with a pair of scissors, and they Procrustes-like held the handles of them, now stretching, now lopping off myriads of years, facts, and life-phenomena, just as it suits their own pattern; fitting all things to their intellect-bed, quite regardless whether intellect has anything in common with life, and is a measure of it or not. So the natural development towards power-idolatry goes on, and life-science is despised. But on what ground do we now hold alchemy and astrology to be quackery and nursery-babble that does not equally apply to all scientific research when it leaves its facts and launches into the regions of space, makes endless demands on the faith or credulity of man, frames its own conditions for its own theories, talks of "*tendencies*," prophecies, and shuts its eyes to the first principles of sound investigation, and very often of common logic and common word-knowledge also in proclaiming its dreams.

But let us leave these prophets, these disciples

of Procrustes, and again return to the facts of human life, and their clear conclusions. The first of which is, that intellect cannot be the great power in a world where there is nothing suited to the perfecting of intellect, or indeed intellect enough to be perfected. It would be a cruel and irrational world if it was. As cruel and irrational a state of things as if we imagined a rock in the midst of the Atlantic crowded with migratory birds, whose nature made them dependent on migration for happiness, though only one in a thousand of them ever had wings for flight, and all the rest lived wretchedly on what they could pick up in their barren home, longing to pass to the lands which nature made them ceaselessly long for, but tied down for ever to the rock which nature had condemned them never to leave. How much worse off man would be than this if the power-worshippers are to be believed; as much worse, as his hopes and longings are greater, and his means of accomplishing them less. But this cross-purpose is impossible in a world created by God. There must then of necessity be a scheme of God for bringing all men at all times to the

true end of their existence, a scheme properly attested by Him. Finally this scheme involves of necessity a society acting under God, with laws from Him, and power to act in His name; a society which illustrates God's truth by their lives and actions, and which is commissioned to make God's truth known. These two postulates are a necessity. For as soon as the idea of an intellect-sovereignty is rejected on account of its reaching so few, it becomes evident that no book, no process demanding learning can avail by itself. The lives of men are the only book the ignorant can read without schooling and without requiring time for study. This involves the living society, showing forth truth by its life: and the second point, that the society shall busy itself in making known truth to those who can learn, is only a subdivision of this first great fact. This was in effect the answer of Christ to St John the Baptist, "Go, show those things which ye do hear and see, the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." All men who make it their object in life

to benefit their fellow-creatures are brothers, fellow-subjects in the great kingdom of feeling and love, and as such are so strongly contrasted in principle, and very often in practice, with all the idolaters of power-worship as to form an utterly distinct body from them.

But, distinct as this society is, its great law, the law given it by its Lord, binds it to have no distinctive marks of its best workings. Its true life is to be self-denial and self-sacrifice; and not a sign of this is to be seen excepting in results; all the processes are to be hidden from curious eyes. The command is, "When thou fastest anoint thine head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast." All the outward appearances are to be cheerful and festive, there is to be no sourness of withdrawal, either in heart, or face, or dress. True self-sacrifice sacrifices also the desire for sympathy with its self-sacrifice, and is as if it feasted whilst it fasts. Just as a man at a great dinner-party would clearly be practising far greater self-restraint by complete self-mastery in the midst of delicacies, by cheerful pleasant rejection both of the pomp

of food, and the pomp of riches and rank, without seeming to reject them, meeting all without being tempted by any, because he rates them all at their proper value, than the same man if he secured himself from that kind of temptation by getting out of the reach of his fellow-creatures. In his cheery power meanwhile he would make the service of God lovely, though none but those who were following the same track would detect the process. Hence the doctrine of a well-known philosopher "that he never saw a Christian" is an obvious truth. What conceivable reason is there why he should? How should he see beneath the ordinary dinner-party life those amongst the guests who "fast"? Who would reveal his feelings on such points to an embodiment of cause and effect? To say nothing of the command not to do so, which leaves all processes of self-denial to be searched out, if known at all, by those only who are doing the same. So many fast, many give up all the world counts valuable and seem to common eyes to do nothing of the kind. Those who when young, in making their choice in life, bring their trained and hitherto victorious powers

into God's service in humble parishes, and leave deliberately all hope of wealth and all hope of renown, which whether they come or not are the prizes before the eyes of youth, these men fast indeed throughout their lives, even if, as is sometimes the case, the wealth and honour they have rejected comes to them unbidden, and blinds still more the eyes of men to those who fast. They fast who risk their all in some good cause, for the sake of the good cause, and face shame, and disappointment, and ruin, and contempt, even though to them also success brings power, and men in their blindness call them lucky.

In all ranks, midst rich or poor, men or women, they fast who quietly leaven the world with unselfish goodness, leaven it by contact, hidden, unobserved, with glad countenances doing works of faith. And many might say with perfect truth "they never saw a Christian." For thus the world moves, silently and swiftly on its great spiritual axis, with progress so unobserved, that it has rolled away from the very atmosphere of bitterness and accursed lusts before it has discovered the difference; and got so far, that the

change from heathen common social life to Christian common social life is in a sense so complete that it cannot be recognized. Whilst Christian thought and language will not permit the few who see what has taken place, to speak even of the imperfect vision of horrible lusts they find recorded, and as far as they can speak they seem to those who hear as men that dream, so utterly has former darkness passed. Thus philosophers can deny that there is any change at all. And now the ground of contest is changed, and the idolatry of intellect-worship and its robberies from revelation have to be exposed rather than the idolatry of sensuality as in earlier times; and the beneficent, humble kingdom of feeling and love to be proclaimed as the one true progress. This great union under Christ is becoming daily more and more obvious, so that the broad line between heathenism with its sensuality, at the first, and Christianity was scarcely more definite than the line is growing day by day between power-worship, with its assumption, and Christianity. Though it is not always easy to trace the principle at stake in its new dress. The forms are different, and the

delusions vary as the earth grows old, but it matters little what the dream may be that blinds us to the world as it is, and the conditions of life and truth. Imagination always fills the world with phantoms. Visions of sunny climates, festal throngs, temples and hero-forms people the old forgotten years; grey altars of gods hymned in many a thrilling poem, fair maidens dancing in summer evenings, and glad songs, seem to be in the gloom behind, as we look back; and all the glory of unfulfilled hopes circles with a diadem of light the misty form of ages that have passed. All that yearning spirits of old have fashioned in the mightiest hours of their uprising, all that the unsatisfied longings of weary hearts now make them willing to find in bygone times, the burden of hope and fear and love and sorrow borne by the fleeting hours, all join to give a strange interest to the early dwellers in earth's great kingdoms, and to hide the agony of the slave, the despair of his proud master. But it is the brightness of a lie, if it is mistaken for happy life. This was the old dream. But what better, higher message for mankind is there to be found in the brain-cobwebs,

the countless gossamers that glitter in our sun? The form of the dream is changed, imaginations innumerable, knowledge-births and knowledge-guesses, of what has been millions of ages back, and what is yet to be, have taken the place of drinking songs and warlike chants. The old dream was born of false views of animal life in man, the new dream is born of false views of intellect-life; both have a basis which might be good; but if both equally blind the heart to the great life-kingdom and its science, to the facts which concern every living being now and for ever, both are hostile to truth, so far as they despise these facts; the subtler the dream, the more hostile is it of the two. What are the facts of the material earth compared with the facts of redeeming power? Every day, for those who choose to study facts, the blind do open their eyes to true light, the lame do learn to walk on errands of love, the lepers do have the ghastly blotches of sin removed, the deaf do open their ears to messages divine, even the dead in heart have their hardness or despair taken away, and rise up to fresh and happy life; above all, the

poor, the wretched, the weak, the old, have good tidings and great joy. These are no less true facts in our day than they were when Christ called them as His witnesses of old. The earth has many facts like these, quiet, silent, yet eloquent facts to those who have the will to search them out. Life-science gathers them up, appeals to them, challenges the power-worshippers with them, calls on intellect to look at these universal facts, since she boasts of her fact-kingdom; and not to set dead matter above life, since she boasts of her intelligence; to learn her own place in creation as a servant, since she boasts of her wisdom; and to believe that an Allwise Creator cannot have left His noblest beings without help in a world not fitted to them, or allowed lies, or a mixture of lies, to be their life-food and source of growth towards perfection, since she names the name of Truth. Life-science proclaims that power-worship, however disguised, is the natural development of fallen man carrying him farther and farther in revolt from life, and love, and true advancement. Life-science proclaims that all her own works are works of life, works

of building up, of construction, of helping, of healing, and rejects from her kingdom all who make attack and work against others the law of their actions. And as in the first days of Christian life the gulf between heathen sensuality and the acknowledgment of Christ was so wide and deep that nothing else could compare with it, so now once more after centuries of bitter experience and rival claims, there seems to be a growing conviction that there is a union, a brotherhood, possible for all who strive to lead holy *peaceful* lives for Christ's sake, and who will quietly do their own work of good and let others do theirs. It is impossible to think that the various differences of doctrine and belief which the various tempers of mankind, and human fallibility, have brought about, will ever cease; most certainly they will not cease by being attacked; let us then boldly assert that it is good and right for every man earnestly to uphold his own distinctive creed both for himself and for those whom he teaches. But a creed is positive, what a man does believe, not what he does not. To be declaiming *against*, instead of speaking *for*, is a sin.

Men do not learn to love by being abused. It would be well to remember also, that abuse is equally fatal to the wielder of it and to its object. Minds are not conquered by force of any kind, or the user of force made happy by its use. The kingdom of love rejects utterly and absolutely all war of word or deed in its own cause. This principle is definite and strong. A time has come when a practical belief in Christ as the Life-King, testified by the doctrinal bond of the Apostles' Creed, and the practical bond of a pure and peaceful life, should unite, in a voluntary and permissive communion, all true workers, however varied their ideas may be as to the manner in which Christ works His will on earth. Attack is not work at all, it is the pulling down or preventing work. Let men leave work alone and not attack it, for they may be sure that in a kingdom of love all peaceful loving work has at least a far-off grasp on the golden chain, and a perpetual tendency to be drawn onwards by links of love towards the truest purest form, the most perfect agency by which the God of Love and Truth reveals Himself to man; and may be

certain also that untrue false work will soon fall of itself if truer work is near. True doctrine and true work are in the highest lives united; and through all gradations they have a growing tendency, however for a time separated, to become united the more genuine the efforts that are made, and they will be united hereafter. Every man in earnest to build up any truth can sympathize with, even though he may require to keep aloof from, anyone who is clearly an earnest builder too. But earnestness in attack breeds hate. Hate called by a religious name in a religious cause is sacrilege as well as hate. Hate and sacrilege profane the realm and shrine of feeling and its King. The curse of Christ rests on those who proselytise in this spirit. If a choice must be made: for me, I had rather stand outside the garden of the Lord, where, perchance, some sun and shade might reach me from its glades, some sweet breezes scatter blessings from its flowers, some trickling streamlets bring fresh life to other lands from its sacred soil, nay, who knows, some seeds, wind-wafted, strike their roots, and grow, and blossom in the wilderness; rather

this, than be inside, wielding power, pulling up the plants, pulling up the tares and wheat together, against my Lord's express commands, flinging them out to live or die, when bidden not to do so. For me; I had rather stand with praying hands and humble heart at the door of the great sanctuary than join inside the ranks of those who shoot out their arrows, even bitter words, and brawl, and rail, before the altar of the King of Love, and grasp at power in the very shrine of the King of self-sacrifice.

Reason, methinks, may possibly be brought to receive any specious fable for a time, but not that lies are a message from the King of Truth, not that lies nourish all the generations of His truest and His best, not that hate is an instrument of the King of Love, not that hate is a prop of Christ's Church. This is indeed to shut the eyes hard. This is indeed rebellion whatever name it may take. Love shown in life, and belief in the Creed, ought to bind together in permissive communion every loyal subject of Christ.

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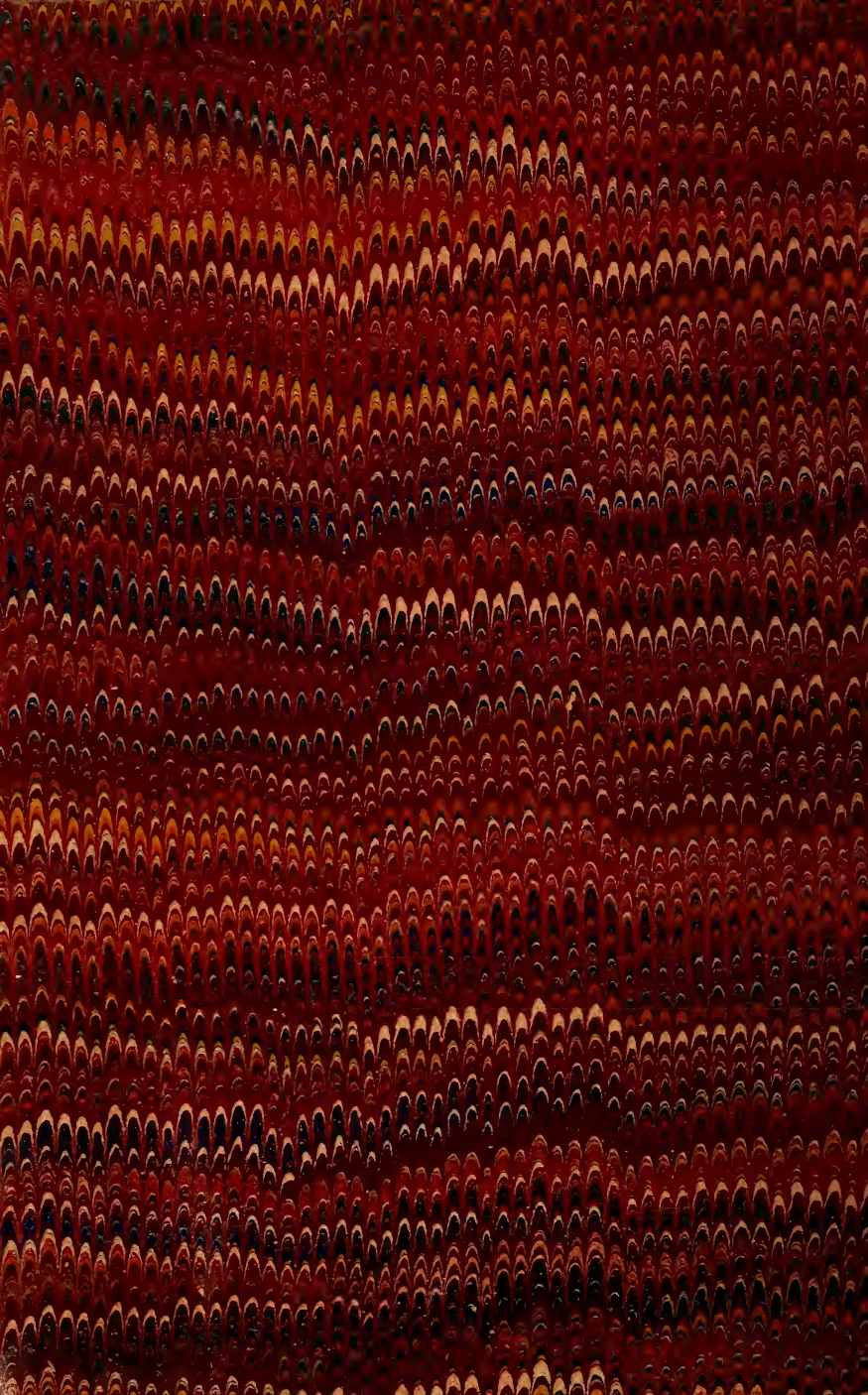

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